692 shrine and temporary ostracism were the chief
681 punishments, but at least among Iravas, grave
offenders were sometimes excommunicated with
the consent of the janmi and sold in slavery to
623 Arab traders. The smaller castes of village
servants each had their own assemblies extending
over a group of adjacent villages, who met
582 chiefly at marriages and funerals. In all of these
castes, the local group of the assembly, while
not strictly endogamous, was the group within
which the majority of marriages took place.

631 Among retainer-Nayars, the local group might
692 comprise either one large desam, or a group of
681 two to four adjacent desams when these were
occupied by retainer Nayars of the same subcaste.
Such an area was called a tara in South
Malabar and a kara in Cochin, the assembly,
a tara-koottam or kara-yogam. The assembly
comprised the headmen of all Nayar property-groups
who met to settle intra-caste disputes,
adjudicate in trials of offences against caste law
and arrange the public ceremonies of their common
Bhagavadi temple. Offences such as wrongful
interdining with low caste men, small debts,
thefts and adultery with women of the lower polluting
castes were punished by fines paid to [34]
the Bhagavadi temple, or in grave cases by excommunication,
and sale into slaver. Similarly
intra-caste offences were settled among desavaris
within an assembly of the nad, and among
nadavaris within an assembly of the kingdom.
The local Nayar assembly also had power to arbitrate
in disputes and offences against the village
at large among the lower castes. Some

514 was confined to the village or (in the case of the
571 smaller castes) a group of adjacent villages.
631 For retainer-Nayars, apart from their excursions in war, it was confined to the group of adjacent villages of one subcaste; for temple servants and Nayar village headmen, the nad; for naduvaris and kings, the kingdom; and for Nambudiris, Kerala. It may be hypothesized that this variation in the field of social relations of the different ranked orders of the society is intrinsic in any feudal system with centralized political institutions.

582 (4) Hypergamy in the Upper Castes

611 Each of the castes below middle class Nayars was endogamous, as is usually in the caste system throughout India. But among the higher "clean" castes, a complicated system of hypergamous unions linked the several groups. By hypergamy I mean the union of a man of higher caste with a woman of lower caste.

582 In discussing hypergamy, it is necessary first
611 to explain the descent-system of Nambudiris.
596 In the patrilineal [36] extended family of Nambudiris, only the eldest son was permitted to marry, with Vedic rites, within his own caste and beget children for his family. Younger sons
[595] had recognized liaisons (not initiated with Vedic rites and regarded by Nambudiris not as marriage but as concubinage) with women of the matrilineal castes, whose children belonged to the mother's caste and lineage by matrilineal descent. However, if in any generation the eldest Nambudiri son was was sterile, the second son

596 might marry a Nambudiri woman and beget
611 children for his family. Nambudiri spinsters,
582 of whom there were many, remained in their
natal houses and were maintained by their kinsmen.
The eldest son of a Nambudiri family
[595] might however have several Nambudiri wives
and also several Nayar concubines. Nambudiri
younger sons lived and ate in their natal households,
headship of which passed from the eldest
son down the line of his brothers and then dropped
to the eldest son in the filial generation. In this
way the Nambudiri family was prevented from
splitting into segments, and was enabled to
maintain its position on the ancestral estate over
[597] many generations. If in any generation a family
had no son, succession was ensured by the
adoption of a daughter's husband or of a man of
a family related in the cognatic line.

613 In the royal lineages, since each lineage,
582 though exogamous, regarded itself as a separate
837 caste and admitted no peers, sexual unions were
entirely hypergamous. In Cochin and Walluvanad,
royal women had liaisons only with [37] Nambudiris
of the highest and wealthiest subcastes
within the kingdom; royal men, with women of
chiefly, village headmen or retainer Nayar lineages.
In the Calicut lineage, which came to
power later and took time to establish its ritual
rank, royal women till the 18th century had
liaisons either with Nambudiri men or with men
of the ancient royal lineages of tributary kingdoms,
who though through conquest were subordinate
to the upstart Zamorins, were still regarded
by them as of higher ritual rank. Later

613 when they had established themselves as of high
582 ritual rank, and when some of their vassal lin-
837 eages had died out, the Zamorins too looked only to Nambudiri for genitors. Royal men similarly had liaisons with women of the lower matrilineal subcastes, as in the Cochin and Walluvanad kingdoms.

582 Among temples servants, retainer-Nayars
837 and middle class Nayars, the majority of unions took place between individuals of the same subcaste. A small proportion of retainer and middle class Nayar women had liaisons with Nambudiris of the lower subcastes, Embrandiri Brahman priests (who followed the same descent system as Nambudiris) or with royal, chiefly, village headmen or temple servant men. In the Nayar village headmen's lineages, a larger proportion of women had liaisons with men of the chiefly or royal lineages, or with Nambudiris; and in the chiefs' lineages, with royal or Nambudiri men, though in these subcastes too, individuals of the same subcaste but different lineages might have unions with each other. Similarly, a small [38] proportion of men in each Nayar subcaste, down to retainers, had liaisons with Nayar women of a lower subcaste, down to the rank of middle class Nayars. Chart I shows the mutual ritual ranking and the direction of hypergamous unions between the higher castes of the kingdom. In the temple servant castes, whose occupational allegiance was exclusively with Nambudiris, women had liaisons either with Nambudiris or with men of their own caste. There was no intermarriage either way between temple

582 servant castes or between temple servants on
837 the one hand and royalty, chiefs or village headmen, who belonged to separate hierarchies.

Hypergamous unions, even more than other
582 unions between Nayars of the same subcaste,
613 emphasized the exclusively sexual role of the
837 lovers and genitors of a Nayar lineage. In most circumstances a higher caste lover lived and ate in his natal household and was maintained by it; he visited his mistress after supper and left before breakfast, after which he took a purifying bath before re-entering his natal house. He might not eat in his mistress's household, and following the morning bath might not touch her or his children. The only exception to these
[144] residential rules arose in the case of Nambudiris who had liaisons with royal women. These were received as temporary occupants of the palace and housed in separate buildings at the expense of the royal lineage, at some distance from the buildings occupied by the princes and the royal women. Like all other Nambudiri genitors of Nayar children, however, they [39] visited their mistresses at night and in the daytime carried out their ritual duties in private, attended by their own Nambudiri cooks and serving men.

613 It is clear however that hypergamous liaisons,
837 though of an almost exclusively sexual nature,
571 knit together the several castes concerned with the secular administration and with the religious law and public rituals of the state. Though not recognized by them as kinsmen, elderly members of aristocratic Nayar and temple servant

592 with their parents into any convenient vacant
[582] room. At the same time, the separate, unique role of each woman as potential founder of a new taravad is recognized in certain rules: both sororate and sororal polygymy are traditionally forbidden, for example, since the inter-personal unity between sisters, as well as their separate positions each at the head of a line of matrilineal descendants, must not be endangered or distorted by their extra-lineage ties.

592 [72] (2) The Traditional Institution of Marriage.

581 Consistent with the unity and multiplex economic, legal and ceremonial functions of the taravad as a corporate group, marriage was traditionally the slenderest of ties, while as a
592 social concept fatherhood scarcely existed. We
582 have mentioned already that at the tali-rite of
608 retainer, middle class and servant Nayars and of temple servants, the immature girls of a lineage were collectively "married" and divorced before puberty by their local caste group as a whole, represented by their individual enangar. In desavari, chiefly and royal lineages the tali was usually tied by a man of a higher sub-caste from which the lineage was wont to draw lovers for its women in hypergamous liaisons. The women of desavari lineages were thus usually "married" by naduvari men, naduvari and royal women either by Nambudiri men or by men of some higher-ranking royal lineage more ancient than their own. In all castes, the tali-tier had no subsequent responsibilities and if he wished need never visit the woman again.

592 His relationship was however remembered, and
● 582 he was regarded as the ritual father (appan) of
608 the woman's children, in contrast to their genitor
or or to the step-father who happened currently to be visiting a woman, these latter both being
608 called acchan. Ritual fatherhood meant nothing
764 at all except that at the death of the tali-tier,
602 the woman and all her children must observe
death pollution. Death pollution was otherwise observed only for matrilineal kin; it was not until recently observed for the genitor or other lovers of the mother. Its observance for the tali-tier shows that even the Nayars, with their extreme emphasis on the matrilineal line and total exclusion of the husband and father from economic, legal or ceremonial rights, recognized the field of kinship to extend beyond the unilineal descent-group, and felt the need to give ceremonial recognition [73] to the concepts of marriage and of paternity, even though they gave none to the individual husband and father.

595 After the tali-rite and shortly before or after
833 puberty, a girl might enter into a number of
unions with men of her own subcaste (including, if both wished, the ritual husband of the tali-rite) or of an appropriate higher subcaste. Similarly, a man might cohabit with any number of mistresses from his own or an appropriate lower subcaste. A man usually visited a mistress after supper, and left before breakfast; even today in orthodox matrilocal households men eat with their sisters and mothers and visit or accept food in the conjugal house in the daytime only on special invitation from the wife's karanavan.

595 within the chiefdom political control over and
701 within villages was insufficient and feuds were
566 common between adjacent villages and between
184 individual lineages. The Nayars were not organized as a permanent militia of retainers, but merely fought occasionally on [80] behalf of a local chief. Apart from small subcastes of servants round the palaces, they formed an independent caste of cultivators owning their own land and lacking the overlordship of Nambudiri Brahmans and the service of agricultural serfs. Consistent with the absence of a permanent military organization, we find that in the North, Nayar men themselves managed the cultivation of their estates and sometimes actually worked the land, and that here residence was traditionally avunculocal, and polyandry unknown.

835 (3) Traditional Incest Prohibitions and Preferential Marriages 582

The traditional incest prohibitions were simple. In all castes of Malabar, prohibitions on sex-relations between kin coincide with prohibitions on marriage; this in any case would obviously be so among Nayars who did not distinguish the two and had no concept of adultery. Sex relations were strictly prohibited within the lineage: infringement of this rule was traditionally punishable by death, and during British rule with excommunication. Relations were also prohibited between a woman and two men of the same property-group, as between a man and two women of the same property-group. Sororal polygyny and fraternal polyandry, as well

582 Sororal polygyny and fraternal polyandry, as well
595 as marriage to the dead spouse's sibling, were
835 thus automatically forbidden. This rule appears to relate to the paramount need to keep minimal the potential rivalries between individuals of the same sex within the group. It was also consistent with the relationship of respect between
585 them. Even today, when ceremonies mark the
602 start of the post-puberty marriage, a man's
595 lineage elders may not attend his marriage ceremonies and feast. He goes to the bride's house with unrelated friends of his own age or with affines, ideally, his sister's husbands. For marriage is a jolly undertaking and only such men may joke together about sexual scandals in the village. But [81] reticence is required in discussing their own marriage, and the respect a woman owes her older kinswomen demands that she interfere in no way in their marital life. Today, a woman treats her father or step-father with affectionate respect of a less formal kind than that accorded to the mother's brother, but she should not touch him after puberty. With her elder sister's husband she observes still greater formality, based on the incest prohibition. The ban on sororal polygyny is particularly comprehensible in view of the fact that Nayar women were traditionally open rivals for the attentions of men: many writers mention this and it is still discernible in villages today. The mutual respect and amity required of women of the same property-group was incompatible with such rivalry.

835 However, the ban on relations with two persons
582 of the same group was less stringent than the

835 rule of lineage exogamy. Even today, cases
582 occur very occasionally in which a man cohabits both with his wife and with their daughter by the marriage, or with his wife and her younger sister. Such affairs are viewed with disgust as evidence of extreme ill-breeding, but they do not merit excommunication or exclusion from public ceremonies. This appears to be because
[611] traditionally, only matrilineal kinsfolk are regarded as kin in the true sense of the word: incest prohibitions outside this range are a matter of propriety rather than of religious law.

582 No other unions outside the lineage and within the appropriate caste appear traditionally to have been prohibited. Relations with the father's sister (or rather with the sister of the mother's lover, since paternity was often uncertain) were disfavoured because of generation difference but even today they are not prohibited. Unions were definitely permissible between the Nambudiri son and the Nayar daughter of a Nambudiri eldest son (i.e., between paternal step-siblings); it is [82] not certain whether they were ever permitted between two Nayars known to be paternal step-siblings, but they are not permitted today. Marriage to the brother's daughter and the paternal parallel cousin are still permitted, though they are not preferential marriages between Nayars. Marriage is however preferential between a Nambudiri and his paternal parallel cousin of a matrilineal caste. This is particularly true of unions between aristocratic Nambudiris and royal women, since it perpetuates a bond between two groups both of which are small and highly

582 specialized in wealth and power. This is the only case I know of in South India of preferential marriage to the paternal parallel cousin: it is a function of the unique hypergamous relationship between patrilineal and matrilineal castes.

Incest prohibitions were therefore in full harmony with the Nayar emphasis on the unity and exclusiveness of the matrilineage and their minimal recognition of marital and patrilineal ties.

582 602 Today, cross cousin marriage is much favored and serves to harmonize the modern conflicting claims of a man's natal and his conjugal kin. It has been common for at least a hundred years since polyandry began to die out. It was certainly of course permissible in the traditional system and must often have occurred, since enangar are often cross cousins and unions between enangar of the local group were presumably the most numerous and most stable. A likely guess is that a preference for unions between cross cousins, when these were known, traditionally existed alongside plural marriages, though the two seem at first sight mutually opposed. For these institutions (cross cousin marriage and very weak plural marriages) are both functions of the unity of the lineage. They are opposite, but alternative, methods of dealing with the "matrilineal puzzle". (13) When matrilineal bonds are of para-[83]mount strength as they were among the Nayars, a weak and transient conjugal tie is likely, because natal and conjugal ties inevitably oppose each other. Plural liaisons with frequent separation cater for matrilineal bonds by minimizing conjugal

582 ties, and these were traditionally the common
602 solution in this area. But even in a promiscuous community, it seems likely that the effective relationship between a man and children he believes to be his cannot always be altogether overridden and may assert itself in face of matrilineal ties. When this happens some other solution to the conflict is required. Cross cousin marriage, particularly matrilateral, (14) is one such partial solution, since it harmonizes for two members and for two generations of a lineage conjugal interests which would otherwise be opposed.

601 (4) Kinship Terms

As might be expected, the traditional Nayar terminology of this area includes terms only for matrilineal kin, their spouse, and the children of ego's wife. Today, terms are sometimes used to address cognates, but they are very seldom used in reference; descriptive terms like "my father's nephew" and my mother's father" are used instead. Contrary to the view of Murdock and Emeneau, (15) the Nayars of this area do not have a bifurcate merging system with Iroquois cousin terms: indeed none of the matrilineal groups of Kerala (North Malabar Nayars, Tiyyars and Muslims, South Malabar and Cochin Nayars, or Travancore Iravas and Nayars) have such a system, which in this region is confined to the patrilineal and double unilineal castes below Nayars.

Within the lineage, men of the first and second ascending generations are equated as "male

113 1921), p. 241.

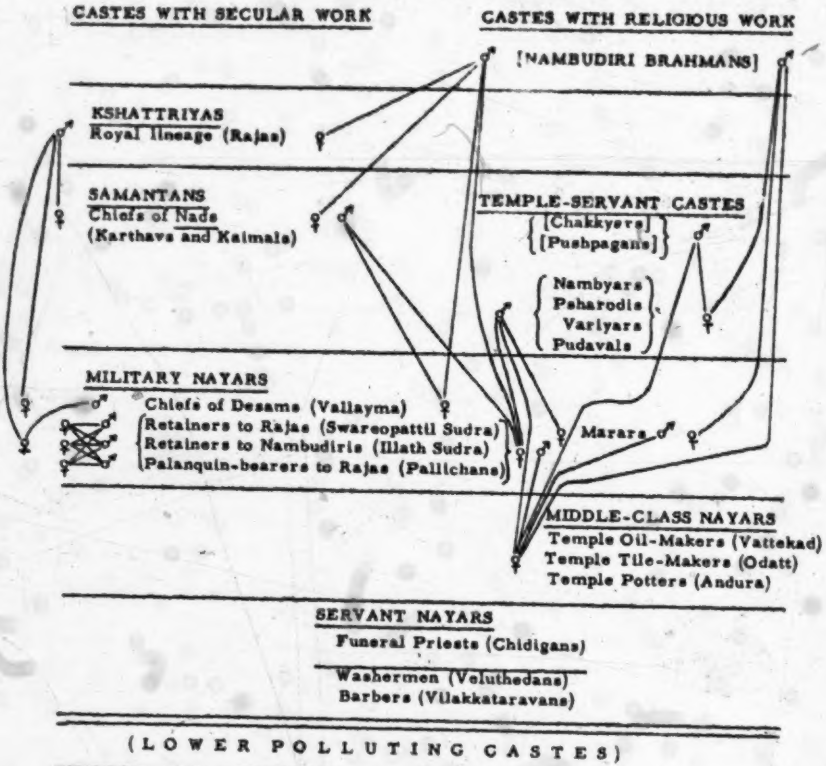
(11) A. I. Richards, Some Types of Family Structure amongst the Central Bantu, in African Systems of Kinship and Marriage (Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, 1950).

582 (12) Matrilateral cross cousin marriage is preferred to patrilateral, since it harmonizes the conjugal interests of a man and his sister's son, the most rivalrous relationship between men. It is also of course possible with hypergamous unions, whereas patrilateral cross cousins unions are not. In one Cochin village 7.2% of living Nayar women had married the father's own or classificatory maternal nephew; 1.6% had married the own or classificatory mother's brother's son. [103] Taking the women of six lineages over five generations, 13.9% of marriages were to the father's nephew, 9.0% to the uncle's son. In Walluvanad division, South Malabar, of the women of nine lineages over five generations, 11.2% had married the father's nephew, 4.7% the uncle's son (own or classificatory).

613 573 (13) In Murdock's sense of a matrilineal, matrilocal unit with the husbands of the women as permanent residents. However, in a true matriclan adult male members of the matrilineage or matrisib would be living away with their wives whereas in the royal lineages princes lived at home and merely visited their wives nearby. In most naduvari and all lower subcaste lineages, women were visited only occasionally by their Nambudiri lovers who lived in their own households.

1; Gough-104 E+A, 5 (no date) 1954 AWII Kerala AWII

CHART I RITUAL RANKING AND HYPERGAMOUS UNIONS BETWEEN THE HIGHER CASTES OF COCHIN


CASTES WITH SECULAR WORK
CASTES WITH RELIGIOUS WORK
[NAMBUDIRI BRAHMANS]
KSHATTRIYAS
Royal lineage (Rajas)
SAMANTANS
Chiefs of Nads
(Karthavs and Kaimals)
TEMPLE-SERVANT CASTES
[Chakkyars]
[Pushpagans]
Nambyars
Pisharodis
Variyars
Pudavals
MILITARY NAYARS
Chiefs of Desams (Vallayma)
Retainers to Rajas (Swareopattil Sudra)
Retainers to Nambudiris (Illath Sudra)
Palanquin-bearers to Rajas (Pallichans)
Marars
MIDDLE-CLASS NAYARS
Temple Oil-Makers (Vattekad)
Temple Tile-Makers (Odatt)
Temple Potters (Andura)
SERVANT NAYARS
Funeral Priests (Chidigans)
Washermen (Veluthedans)
Barbers (Vilakkataravans)
(LOWER POLLUTING CASTES)

Key

} indicates equivalence of, or dispute for, rank.

A line drawn across the page indicates that all castes above it rank unequivocally above all castes below it.

Oblique lines and curves indicate some amount of hypergamous mating between the castes.

♂ -male ♀ -female

Castes shown in brackets have patrilineal descent: all others have matrilineal descent.

As a form of group marriage, the Nayar institutions clearly will not 581
fit the definition of marriage proposed in *Notes and Queries in* 851
Anthropology.[9] It did, however, legitimize children, which seems to 121
me the minimum necessary criterion applicable to all those unions
which anthropologists customarily label "marriage." As a new definition
of marriage which will cover all the familiar types, the Nayar
case, and several other unusual cases which are commonly recognized
as marriage, I have suggested the following: "Marriage is a
relationship between a woman and one or more other persons which
provides that a child born to the woman, under circumstances not
prohibited by the rules of the relationship, shall be accorded full
birth-status rights in his society or social stratum" (Gough, 1959: 32).

Nayar men seem always to have chosen wives younger than themselves. 582
A man ranked above his wife, who had to show respect to
him. In the presence of her kin she remained standing before him 593
and seldom spoke to him; she would not be seen talking to him in 576
public outside her home. A woman never used her husband's name;
she addressed and referred to him by plural honorific pronouns. [551]
Hypergamous marriage relationships were even more formal than
those between Nayars. Caste rules of pollution prevented the husband [564]
from receiving food from his wife's kinsfolk. During the daytime, [183]
after taking his purifying bath in the morning, he was forbidden to
touch her or any member of her family.

THE FATHER AND HIS KIN

The most peculiar characteristic of the Central Nayars is that although 595
a form of marriage existed they did not institutionalize the
elementary family of one man, one woman, and their children. This
group was in no sense a legal, residential, commensal, productive, or
distributive unit. An individual man had no legal rights in a particular
wife and her children. He did not reside with them, did not eat
regularly with them, did not produce with or for them, and he did
not customarily distribute goods to his children. A woman had no [851]
legal rights in a particular man—only the right that one *or more* men
admit paternity of her children. Similarly, a child correctly begotten
was assured of legal paternity, but a group of men might fulfill this
role and the child had no subsequent claims on any of them. It
might perhaps be claimed that the group composed of the tāli tier,
his ritual wife, and her children born subsequently received cere-

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[9] "Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are the legitimate offspring of both parents" (*Notes and Queries*, 1951: 110).

opposite sex might talk to each other with rather more freedom than 602 to unrelated persons. In his role of enangan a boy sometimes tied 605 the tāli for his maternal uncle's daughter or stepdaughter of suitable [588] age.

There were no incest prohibitions with patrilateral kin, although a 582 ● man was unlikely to marry his father's own sister because of age [335] differences. Marriage to the father's or stepfather's brother or brother's son was neither prohibited nor preferred. Modern informants thought that if a girl was known to be one's father's daughter by another wife, marriage with her would be avoided as indelicate, but it was apparently not prohibited. The children of brothers were not considered related, and provided they belonged to different lineages, they might marry or not as they chose.

Bilateral cross-cousin marriage was freely permitted, with some preference for marriage to the mother's brother's daughter or stepdaughter. A kāranavan was particularly likely to encourage his nephew to enter marital relations with a daughter of the kāranavan's favorite wife. In this case it was felt that the marital interests of uncle and nephew would be harmonized and the nephew might be less likely to accuse the uncle of infidelity to the taravād if he favored his wife and her children. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is said to have been less favored because it did nothing to smooth the relationships between men of a taravād. It may, also, have been less common because a man had no influence in his son's choice of a wife.

It may seem strange that preferred cross-cousin marriage should have existed side by side with group marriage, for cross-cousin marriage, especially when it is arranged by the senior generation, suggests an interest in prolonging the ties brought about both by paternity and by matrilineal kinship. Group marriage, by contrast, tends to negate the claims and interests of individual fathers. Today, the fact is that cross-cousin marriage is arranged only with the child of an uncle who has had a long and satisfactory marriage relationship. It is never deliberately arranged as a first marriage, with the child of an uncle's previously divorced wife. Further, although young people agree to arranged cross-cousin marriages, they may and fairly often [586] do later dissolve the marriage if things do not go well. One presumes that similar circumstances existed in the days of group marriage. Many men, presumably, entered marriage relations with cross cousins only incidentally—often, presumably, without being fully aware of the blood relationship. It seems quite probable that at other times some men did have an enduring relationship with a particularly

582 favored wife, and that such a man might well arrange for a nephew's first sambandham relationship to be with a daughter of this wife. It seems probable also that such deliberately arranged matrilateral cross-cousin marriages increased in popularity in the nineteenth century, as plural marriages gradually gave place to monogamy. My [178] data suggest also that deliberately arranged patrilateral cross-cousin marriages may have become more popular in the late nineteenth century, as fathers became instrumental in maintaining and educating their sons.[10]

AFFINITY

602 The members of ego's father's household had less significance to 592 him in their interpersonal relationships than as affines or *bandhukkar* (singular, *bandhu*) of his household as a whole. The bandhus or "joined ones" of a household were acquired through the sambandham relationship. They comprised the current spouses of the property group's members, together with the households from which these people came. *Bandham* (affinity) had no practical significance beyond this range.

602 Because of the transience of particular marriages, affinal relation- [576] ships, like those with patrilateral kin, were a matter of etiquette rather than of rights and obligations. Affines of the same caste might visit [574] each other informally and must be received with hospitality. It was also common to invite to the feasts of life-crisis rites the actual spouses of the dwelling group and any close matrilineal kin they might wish to bring with them. Affines, however, had no ceremonial obligations on these occasions and were not under the same categorical obligation to attend as were the representatives of enangar households.

602 Politeness—masking a greater or lesser degree of covert hostility— 576 characterized affinal relationships in general. A man treated his wife's male elders of senior generations with respect, and stood in their presence unless invited to eat with them. They welcomed him with cordial gravity and with the respect due to his caste status if he were a man of higher caste.

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[10] Both types of cross-cousin marriage have however decreased in frequency as a result of the urbanization and mobility of the past thirty years. In one Cochin village in 1949, 7 per cent of living Nayar women had married the father's own or classificatory maternal nephew; less than 2 per cent had married the own or classificatory mother's brother's son. Taking the women of six lineages over five generations, 14 per cent of marriages were to the father's own or classificatory nephew; 9 per cent to the own or classificatory uncle's son. In Walluvanad, of the women of nine lineages over five generations, 11 per cent had married the father's own or classificatory nephew; about 5 per cent, the own or classificatory uncle's son. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is of course impossible in hypergamous unions.

A man's relationships with his wife's older matrilineal kinswomen 602
were less formally respectful. He might sit with them and exchange
village news. They served food to him when he ate in their house and
were the persons who usually greeted him first on an evening visit.
Although she welcomed them at first out of pride in her daughter's [606]
popularity, a woman was likely in time to become jealous of her
sons-in-law. If they were tactful they treated her with courtesy and
submitted to her whims.

A man tended to avoid his wife's sisters or classificatory sisters 607
who were younger than himself. They treated him with extreme
respect similar to that accorded to an older brother, and avoided him
as far as possible after they had reached puberty. Incest prohibitions
were relevant here: a man was forbidden to have marital relations [835]
with two women of the same household, and a woman, with two
men from the same household. These prohibitions of course partly [582]
served to prevent father-daughter incest. Marriage to a member of a
dead or divorced spouse's household was also forbidden.

These rules in general appear to relate to the need to keep minimal 602
potential rivalries between persons of the same sex within the matri- 578
lineal household. They were also consistent with the relationship of
extreme respect and social distance between the men of a taravâd.
Tensions between these men were sufficiently acute in any case; they
might have been intolerable if two of them had shared a wife. There
was also the attitude that sexual relationships should be kept strictly [834]
segregated from ties to matrilineal kin. A boy's matrilineal kinsmen
were even forbidden to accompany him to his bride's house at the be-
ginning of his first sambandham. Instead he took with him brothers-
in-law, unrelated friends, or sometimes a cross-cousin. For marriage [581]
was a gay undertaking, a matter of personal pleasure, and only men
who stood to each other in a familiar and non-authoritative relation-
ship might have knowledge of each others' marital affairs.

Similarly, the ban on marriage to two women of the same property 602
group is understandable in that Nayar women were open rivals for 582
the attentions of men. Many writers mention this and it is still dis-
cernible at the present day. Apparently the respect and amity re-
quired of women of the same household was incompatible with such
rivalry.

However, the prohibition of relations with two members of the 835
same property group was less stringent than the rule of lineage ex-
ogamy. Nambudiri Brahmans are said to have occasionally pressed
their attentions on two sisters in spite of their family's reluctance.

separate segments, gave them economic independence and a share in the government, and made them representatives of the lineage as a whole. If the lineage separated into two or more branch property groups, their estates were managed by their senior men after the sthānis had been removed. The whole lineage might thus cohere for a number of generations. When, however, taxes ran low and the political offices became financially weak, the sthānis had a tendency to revert to the property groups from which they came and, as heads of them, to seek independent rule over a portion of the chiefdom or kingdom. Sthānams were thus an integrative device which developed when a ruling lineage was already strong. They could not maintain its strength if the economic basis of its power was removed, nor could they ultimately prevent disputes of the branches for the central office if the lineage became very large. 613 554

RELATIONS BETWEEN ARISTOCRATIC LINEAGES

Each office-bearing lineage had as its enangar one or two higher-ranking lineages from the range of those within which its women were wont to draw visiting husbands. Thus village headmen often had their district chiefs as enangar. A district chief's lineage might have the royal lineage, a conquered royal lineage, or a Nambudiri Brahman family as enangar. The Calicut royal lineage had two conquered royal feudatory lineages as enangar, and some other royal lineages had Nambudiri Brahman families. The enangar fulfilled the usual ceremonial obligations at life-crisis rites, and tied the tālis of girls. Unlike those among the retainer Nayars, these enangar obligations were not reciprocal. A district chief's lineage might thus receive enangar services from royals, but would give them to village headmen. Appropriately, the enangar relationship among aristocrats, like the marriage relationship, was thus asymmetrical. Unfortunately I lack information about whether aristocratic enangar, like those of retainers, had the right to bring to trial offenders against the religious laws of caste. 613 634 622 554

It is clear that hypergamous marriages and asymmetrical enangar relations were adapted to the potential political and ritual mobility of office-bearing lineages and to the fact that at any given time such a lineage might not be able or willing to acknowledge others as its equals in political or ritual rank. In most situations therefore an office-bearing lineage could act as though it formed a separate caste. There were some contexts, however, in which this was not possible. One of these was adoption. If a lineage was obliged to adopt, it had to find some other lineage whose members it was willing to acknowledge as peers. This problem was usually surmounted by adopting from a lin- 613 [582] 613 577

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marks that "When a high-caste Nayar becomes ripe, he turns into a 634
king." 635

Low productivity and poor communications perhaps made the ex-
action of tribute more difficult than in Central Kerala, and this fact, 621
plus the uncertain nature of trade, made the local rulers perennially 634
short of funds. This is probably the reason why, although they were [651]
trained for warfare in gymnasia in their villages, Nayars were not
regularly conscripted into a national army. Instead, they merely fought [701]
sporadically on behalf of local chiefs. Further, chiefs and village head- [622]
men were insufficiently strong to bring all the land under their con-
trol. Their domains were larger than those of Nayar commoners, but [613]
most commoner Nayar property groups were independent small land-
lords in their own right within their villages. Since they were not [592]
full-time warriors and since in many areas they had no serfs, Nayar [423]
commoners also did part of their own cultivation on their small es- [241]
tates. Part of their land, however, they leased to Tiyyar tenants as in
Central Kerala. The polluting castes of village servants had the same [427]
rights and spatial distribution as in Central Kerala. In general, the [564]
economic processes of reciprocity and redistribution in villages pro- [437]
ceeded in a comparable manner.

As independent warrior-cultivators, the Nayar commoners were not 564
divided into separate castes of retainers owing allegiance as vassals 621
and *kānam* tenants to different kinds of lords. Most villages were nom-
inally under Nayar village headmen. In villages of the Kottayam and 613
Kadattunad kingdoms, both the headman's lineage and those of the 582
Nayar commoners belonged to a large caste called Nambiars, who appear to have intermarried throughout the kingdom. Although of the same general caste as commoners, and not forbidden by religious law from intermarrying equally with commoners, Nambiar village headmen's lineages tended, however, to intermarry only with each other or to take wives only from the commoners, occasionally giving their own women in marriage to chiefs or Brahmans. Chiefs claimed a higher caste rank as Samantan Nambiars, and royalty as Kshattriyas. These aristocratic lineages conducted hypergamous marriages with each other and with Nambudiris as in Central Kerela.

Judicial processes were somewhat less centralized than in the 692
Central kingdoms. At least in theory, grave crimes and civil disputes
in urban centers seem to have been tried in royal courts, but most civil
disputes inland were apparently tried by local chiefs. Under the
chiefs, caste assemblies of neighborhoods took care of crimes against
religious law as in the Central kingdoms. Murder among Nayars 000

627 Murder among the Nayars
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sometimes led to blood feuds between lineages (*ibid.*, I: 195–196). Chiefs could usually cut short a feud between commoner lineages, but even these feuds occasionally ran their course for a generation, although cognatic and affinal ties between lineages helped to bring them to a close. Greater feuds were sometimes waged between the lineages of village headmen or chiefs of adjacent districts, in which the commoner Nayars of each area might participate.

Matrilineal Units

THE CLAN

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Among Nambiar commoners the largest matrilineal unit was the clan (*vamsham* or *illam*). It had the functions of exogamy and mutual hospitality. Common descent was merely stipulated and not demonstrated and the order of segmentation within the clan was unknown. [635] The clan might be dispersed throughout a kingdom or even, perhaps, between kingdoms. Its members might point to a particular village as their original ancestral site, but each clan seems to have been much older and its history less clearly documented than among Nayar retainers in Central Kerela. There is no doubt that clans became much more dispersed in the nineteenth century than they had traditionally been because of the development of new areas of cultivation and increased mobility between villages. However, even traditionally the clan seems to have had more members and a wider spread than in the Central area. Its characteristics may be attributed to several factors. First, Nambiars were not divided into separate retainer castes. Thus, although the majority of commoner marriages were within the village, ● [582] Nambiars did have greater freedom to marry and move more freely between villages throughout the realm. Lacking a strong superordinate political structure and internal caste differentiation to give form to their relationships, they had larger kinship units. Newcomers to a village probably did not need to become affiliated to its assembly by order [608] of a superior political authority. Instead, they could probably affiliate themselves with their clan fellows and so at once be provided also with classificatory affines in other clans. Second, Nambiars practised avunculocal residence; husband and wife lived in the husband's matrilineal ancestral house (Buchanan, 1807: 513–514). Sons normally moved back to their own matrilineal homes at puberty, but daughters moved to their husbands' homes. However, Nambiar fathers occasionally gave privately acquired land to their wives and children when they were able. The children might then settle permanently in

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tween them also permitted the observance of the type of very formal 576
etiquette that existed in the Central kingdoms.

A peculiarity of strict avunculocal residence is that it separates 591
a woman from both her sons and her daughters after they are married. 593
The sons return to their ancestral estates and the daughters leave
with their husbands. The relationships of mother and children were
therefore less continuous than in Central Kerala. However, various 591
particular arrangements did often permit women to live with some 582
of their children for a great part of their lives. Cross-cousin marriage
was one of these. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage was the most
popular, because by this means the daughter of a kāranavan and his
wife could be brought into their dwelling group as the wife of the
kāranavan's nephew. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage was also popular
but less common.[1] It was less advantageous unless a shift from
the normal residential arrangements could be made. This sometimes
occurred when a kāranavan succeeded in arranging a marriage between
his son and his sister's daughter. The son might then remain on
his father's ancestral estate for part of his life in patrilocal residence.
Any property which he developed there would pass to his wife's [428]
descendants as matrilineal heirs of the estate. In this way a woman [593]
might keep one of her sons living with her for a large part of her life.

Women were also commonly reunited with their sons at divorce or 591
widowhood, for they would then return to their taravāds to live. 593
Whatever the circumstances of residence, moreover, a man should
place his duties to mother and sisters above those to wife and children.
The ideals of devotion and reverence to matrilineal kinswomen were
the same as in Central Kerala. Brother and sister were drawn apart
by the normal rules of residence but, like mother and son, came together
if the sister were divorced or widowed and returned to her
taravād. A woman also returned to her taravād for several months at [844]
the time of childbirth, for every child had to be born in its own
Taravād.

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[1] In the Kottayam village already cited, 12 per cent of Nambiar commoner
women who had been married had at some time married their father's own or
classificatory sister's son; 8 per cent had married their own or classificatory maternal
uncle's son. Cross-cousin marriage is, as everywhere in Kerala, more common
among the aristocratic lineages of village headmen and chiefs. Of the women of
six village headmen's lineages over a period of five generations, 17 per cent had
married their father's own or classificatory sister's son, and 13 per cent their own
or classificatory maternal uncle's son. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is thus more [593]
usual in North than in Central Kerala. One reason for this is that fathers in North [584]
Kerala more commonly educate and endow their sons. By this means a father acquires [184]
the right to a voice in arranging his son's marriage, often to the father's
niece.

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574 taravād. A woman might also visit for several weeks each year.
[593] Brother and younger sister, like a man and his sister's daughter, observed
rules of partial avoidance—associated with incest prohibitions
[604] —during their periods of co-residence.

591 Sisters were always separated upon marriage, for the Nayars of
this area, unlike those to the south, forbade the marriage of two
● 582 brothers to two sisters. They say that such marriages would endanger
the unity of the brothers' taravād by introducing into it too strong a
613 contingent from another lineage (Gough, 1952). Sisters were together,
591 however, during childhood in their father's house, and were often
[593] reunited in old age when they went back to the taravād. Although
they might seldom have stayed there during childhood and early
[763] youth, women seem usually to have died in their matrilineal ancestral
homes. A woman was often widowed in old age. Alternatively
[586] she might elect to leave her husband and return to her taravād and
[764] sons when her period of childbearing was ended. In any case a
woman's body had to be cremated and her funeral rites performed
in the garden of her taravād house.

Women in avunculocal residence were partly maintained by their
[431] husbands' taravāds in return for domestic services. Nevertheless, important
distributive ties persisted between them and their matrilineal
kinsmen. Usually their kāranavan sent quantities of grain and clothing
to them and their children twice annually after the harvests as part
of their maintenance.

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MARRIAGE

[582] Following the tāli rite, a girl entered into a marriage relationship
(sambandham) with one man at about the age of eleven. The father's
sister's son, if of suitable age, was considered the rightful claimant.
[686] If the girl did not marry him her kāranavan must pay a token fine to
him at the marriage ceremony. The giving of the cloth by the
husband which marked the start of a sambandham was carried out
with ceremony in the girl's ancestral house and was the occasion for
a large feast to relatives of both parties. After the marriage had been
consummated in the girl's house the couple were ceremonially conducted
to the bridegroom's taravād and the girl was formally received
into it by her husband's mother and his kāranavan's wife.

[684] While a marriage endured the husband had exclusive rights in his
wife's sexuality. If he detected her in adultery he might by custom
[848] kill her lover, cut off the hair of his wife, and send her home after
divorce. A woman was not, however, excommunicated from caste

obligations, some fathers, especially kāranavans, kept their children 593
residing with them for most of their lives and gave them property. A 613
child owed his father obedience and respect. If a man divorced his [431]
wife her children also left him and might see little of him thereafter. [586]
However, they had to observe ritual pollution at his death and his [765]
eldest son took part in his funeral rites along with the chief matrilineal
heir. The eldest son also made annual offerings to his dead father's [769]
spirit. In general the relationship with the father was thought of as
intimate and loving. Children must respect him and a daughter must
not touch him after her puberty. But having no legal authority, the
father was not feared. His role was sharply contrasted with that of
the mother's brother. Uncles were said to teach by scolding and [604]
punishment; fathers, by persuasion and laughter.

The father's kin had privileges and obligations at life-crisis rites— 613
most of which took place in the individual's taravād house—and were 796
feasted and made gifts at the ceremonies of first pregnancy, naming,
first rice feeding, tāli tying, marriage, first menstruation, and death. 553
At the naming ceremony, when a baby was one month old, the father's
mother chose the name, the father's father conferred it, and the father
presented the child with a gold waistband. The kāranavan fulfilled
these roles in Central Kerala.

A person was forbidden to marry his father's sibling or paternal 582
parallel cousin of the father's property group. Affectionate respect was 602
the proper attitude toward all the father's older kin. The paternal
grandmother played with a child but did not idolize him as she did 603
her daughter's child, for he was not of her taravād. Unless he was also
a child's kāranavan, the paternal grandfather was a distant kinsman
who had little to do with his grandchild. The mother's father, on the
other hand, usually doted on his grandchild and was a cherished
companion.

Male cross cousins had a joking relationship and were often close 605
companions. Their relationship might be tinged with hostility concerning
the property of their respective father and mother's brother. [578]
Sometimes, at least in the nineteenth century, they quarreled openly
over the inheritance and became enemies thereafter. Male and female
cross cousins had a joking relationship with implicit sexual privileges
if the girl was younger than the man. A boy who returned to his [582]
taravād at puberty often married his matrilateral cross cousin thereafter.
Even if she married someone else he might sleep with her [836]
illicitly before or after the marriage. Elders were either ignorant or [837]

obligations to their children and a strong affective bond with them. The *Karanavān* 105
of their lineage segment was however the authority in important matters. 184

Both in Kottayam and in Cochin, Nāyar women were occasionally married to 105
men of the highest, patrilineal caste of Nambūdiri Brahmans. Children of such unions 564
were Nāyars, and rules of ritual pollution maintained distance between them and their
higher caste fathers. The Nambūdiri father might not eat with his wife and children, 582 ●
and might not touch them during the daytime while in a state of ritual purity. Only [184]
the eldest son of a Nambūdiri house might marry a Nambūdiri wife and beget children
for his own family.

British rule brought about the collapse of the Nāyar armies early in the nineteenth 105
century. Probably as a result of this change, plural marriages gradually died out in 177
Cochin. The lineage system persisted with little change until the turn of the century, 178
but in both areas the employment of men in professional and wage work led to the [613]
development of privately owned property in addition to property owned jointly by
the matrilineal group. The Malabar Marriage Act of 1896 permitted men to register [656]
their marriages and gave the children of such marriages rights in half the personal [421]
property of the father after his death. During this century, the greatly increased
employment of men in salaried work, and the development of cash-crop farming, [464]
have brought about a partial disintegration of the matrilineage, and have tended
toward the emergence of the elementary family as an economic and legal unit. Under 105
the pressure of these changes, laws[3] were passed in 1933 and 1937 which required all 177
men to register their marriages, gave rights of maintenance to their wives and children,
and provided that the whole of a man's personal property be inherited by his wife 178
and children. In addition, the laws permitted, though they did not require, equal 421
division of the matrilineal estate on a per caput basis[4] between all members. Although [656]
some traditional households remain, it has now become fairly customary for a woman
and her immature children jointly to separate their shares of property from those of
the rest of their matrilineal group, and to set up a new establishment with the woman's
husband. He, in turn, may have abstracted his single share of property from that of
his own matrilineal group. Sometimes, the husband himself provides a new house
for his elementary family from his own share of property and his private earnings.
Sometimes the new house is provided from the property of the wife and children,
who receive their husband and father into it as a resident and wage earner. Sometimes
husband and wife pool their property and set up a joint establishment.

Given the modern heterogeneity of legal, economic, and residential arrangements, 769
and given also variations in education, interests, and life experience, it is not surprising
that cults of the dead reveal differential rates of change. I shall be chiefly concerned 178
with the traditional cults, although these persist without change in only a few of the [121]
more traditionally patterned households—actually, in fifteen percent of Nāyar
households in one Cochin village, and in thirteen percent in one village in Kottayam.

The Nāyars participate in three distinguishable categories of cults of the dead. 769
The first comprises a collective cult, by the matrilineal property group, of the ghosts
of matrilineal forebears, which I call lineage ghosts. This cult is non-Sanskritic. The 121
second category comprises various kinds of offerings by individuals to the spirits of 613
dead kinsfolk at funerals or on the anniversaries of deaths. These cults are Sanskritic
in origin. The third category comprises various cults of the ghosts of persons who
were not members of the Nāyar's own lineage; I call these alien ghosts. These cults,

564 The Kurup, Nambiyâr, Viyyûr, Mânavallan, Vengôlan,
Nelliôden, Adungâdi, Kitâvu, Adiôdi, Âmayengolam, all
superior clans, belong, properly speaking, to North
Malabar. The Kiriyattil, or Kiriyam, said to be derived
from the Sanskrit graham, a house (a doubtful derivation)
is the highest of all the clans in South Malabar, and is
supposed to comprise or correspond with the group of
clans just named of North Malabar. In the old days
every Nâyar chief had his Chârnavar, or adherents. The
Purattu Chârna are the *outside* adherents, or the fighters,
and so on, and the Akattu Chârna are *inside* adherents—
clerks and domestics. The clan from which the former
were drawn is superior to the latter. The Ûrâli are said
to have been masons; the Pallichans, mancheel*
bearers.†

The Vattakkâd clan, whose proper métier is producing
gingelly or cocoanut oil with the oil mill, is the lowest
of all excepting, I think, the Pallichan. Indeed, in North
Malabar, I have frequently been told by Nâyars of the
superior clans that they do not admit the Vattakkâd to
be Nâyars, and say they have adopted the honorific affix
"Nâyar" to their names quite recently. It seems rather
[141] odd that this clan, or at any rate one sub-clan of it is
almost the tallest and has the finest nasal index, being
the only clan whose nasal index is finer than that of the
Nambûtiri.

564 Union by marriage, or whatever the function may be
called, is permissible between most of the other clans,
● 582 the rule which was noticed already under "Nambûtiris"‡
by which a woman may never unite herself with her
inferior, being always observed. That is, she may unite
564 herself with a man of her own clan or with a man of any
superior clan, or with a Nambûtiri, an Embrântiri or
any other Brâhman, or with one of the small sects coming
between the Brâhmans and the Nâyars, but she cannot
under any circumstances unite herself with a man of a
[264] clan which is inferior to hers. Nor can she eat with
others of a clan inferior to hers. A man may, and does
[851] without restriction. Her children, by an equal in race
[613] and not only in mere social standing, but never by one

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[493] * A mancheel is a conveyance carried on men's shoulders, more like a hammock *slung* on a pole, with a flat covering over it, than a palankeen. The palankeen is unknown in Malabar.

† There is in the Cochin state a clan, Elâyadan, which is practically equal in status to the Nambûtiri.

‡ Madras Government Museum Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1.

who is racially inferior, belong to *her* Taravâd. The 564
children of the inferior mothers are never brought into 851
the Taravâd of the superior fathers. That is, they are 613
never brought into it to *belong* to it. But they may live
there. And where they do so, they cannot enter the Taravâd kitchen or touch the women while they are eating. Nor are they allowed to touch their father's corpse. They may live in the Taravâd, under these and other disabilities, but they are never *of* it.

It will be as well to avoid here a possible error that 564
may have arisen from the statement that most of the 582
clans may intermingle. Those of the same clan name may marry. The Nâyars of North Malabar are held to be superior all along the line, clan for clan, to those of South Malabar, which is divided from the north by the river Korapuzha, 7 miles north of Calicut; so that a woman of North Malabar would not unite herself to a man of her own clan name of South Malabar. There will be more to say on the point when we come to
"Marriage." A Nâyar woman of North Malabar cannot 564
pass northward beyond the frontier; she cannot pass the 784
hills to the eastward; and she cannot cross the Korapuzha
to the south. It is tabu. To the west is the sea. The 562
women of South Malabar are similarly confined by *custom*, 178
breach of which involves forfeiture of caste. To this 486
rule there is what appears to be an exception, and this exception is now having some slight effect, since of late years the world has come in touch with the Malayâli who now-a-days goes to the University, studies medicine and law in the Presidency town or even in far off England. It is that women of the relatively inferior Akattu Chârna clan are not under quite the same restrictions as regards residence as are those of most of the other clans; so in these days of free communications when Malayâlis travel and frequently reside far from their own country, they often prefer to select wives from this Akatta Chârna clan. This may have some effect on the status of the clan.

But the old order changeth everywhere, and now-a-days Malayâlis who are in the Government service and obliged to reside far away from Malabar, and a few who have taken up their abode in the Presidency town, have wrenched themselves free of the bonds of custom, and taken with them their wives who are of clans other than the Akatta Chârna. But this is more new fangled than orthodox. The interdiction to travel, and the possible exception to it in the case of the Akattu Chârna women, In two individuals (out of 8) the cephalic length was over 20 cm. In three the nasal height was 5 cm. and over. 141 564*

Face.—The notes made on two subjects are—

(1) Forehead high. Supraciliary arches distinctly developed. Very deep nasal notch. Nasal point elevated above the line of the nose.

(2) Supraciliary arches not apparent. Nasal point slightly elevated.

Figure.—The greater number are noted as slight; about one-third as medium to stoutly built.

Hair.—Much as those of the other clans. The man who said he was 72, but who looked 58, showed no sign of baldness; his hair was but moderately grey. Another, aged 36, a very strongly-built man, was becoming bald. Baldness at his age is, I should say, rare. 142 564*

Colour of the skin.—The average is a trifle darker than 29 (Broca). The fairest was fairer than 29, and the darkest was No. 43.

Colour of the eyes.—The average colour of those examined is between 1 and 2 (Broca).

Ornaments call for no remark; they are much as those worn by other Nâyars. Ears are always pierced and earrings worn. 301 564* 304

It would be profitless to deal separately with the measures of the individuals comprising the group A in the same way as the others which are more or less complete, with the exception of the Kurup clan. As said already in the group A consists of— 141 564*

2 of the Nelliôden clan.
2 „ Viyyûr clan.
1 „ Vangilôth clan.
1 „ Kitâvu clan.
3 of the Pallichan clan.
1 „ Muppattinâyiran clan.
2 „ Vyâpâri clan.
1 „ Attikkurissi clan.

and their measures taken collectively have been quoted. The Attikkurissi are endogamous, and the Kitâvu do not wear earrings. [301]

At page 60, Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I, where, speaking of the Nambûtiri Brâhmans, it was said that possibly it may be found that marriage between a brother's daughter and a sister's son may be found to produce the finest issue; to be the best for preservation of the race. This kind of marriage of first cousins, but never of progeny of sisters or of brothers, is in a general way the rule throughout Southern India, and it obtains amongst the 582 [564]*

582
*[564] endogamous Attikkurissi clan of the Nâyars, who look upon it as the most fitting union.

MARRIAGE.

58 "The haughty nobles and the vulgar race
Never must join the conjugal embrace."

The Lusiad.

[656] The common assertion that there is no such thing as marriage amongst the Nâyars, so easily accepted in belief that the Government has been persuaded into a commission to examine the question and to pass an edict entitled "The Malabar Marriage Bill" (which happily fell dead, and is extremely unlikely to effect the customs of the Nâyars and others following the Marumakkattâyam law of inheritance), reminds one of the weary disquisition by people who are dull enough to try and prove that Shakespeare's plays were not written by Shakespeare, but by another fellow of the same name. No events of life being so realistic to man as marriage and death (to the individual, to the tribe, to the people) shallowness rather than sturdy hardihood of racial character is perhaps indicated when we find any downright change in the ceremonial of marriage, even though it be but some ephemeral divagation and not properly speaking radical change.

Buchanan, writing in 1800, tells us that Nâyar girls
175 are married before 10, so that they may not be deflowered
585 by nature, but the husband never afterwards cohabits
[582] with his wife. It would not be decent. He allows her
this and that, and she lives in her mother's house where
[837] she may admit a lover of her own or of a higher caste;
the lover giving her a small present; never a large one,
which would indicate that she was influenced by mercenary motives. He says the young people vie with each
837 other for favour of the other sex, but that, should a Nâyar
175 man have intimacy with a Tîyan (a lower caste) woman,
564 he is put to death and the woman is sold to the Mâppilas!
In the case of the *chère amie* being a slave—presumably
of the Cheruman or cognate tribes—both are put to death.
[626] If this be true, there were forcible means used in those
days for preventing intermixture of the people of the
higher and lower castes. Buchanan tells us also that in
North Malabar, where as a rule the lady lives in his home,
the Nâyar or Nambûtiri lover may put her to death,
should she be guilty of infidelity; and he may send her
home whenever he pleases.

The times have changed things a little: a little only 178
because after all the change is on the surface: it is not
radical. Now-a-days, when there is a penal code to deal [671]
with persons who kill others, the Nâyar cannot keep a [595]
concubine of a caste (not a clan) lower than his own
without fear of social ex-communication. The killing, [564]
except perhaps now and then *sub rosâ*, is a thing of the [595]
past.

The custom which permits the woman to cohabit with 582
a man, her equal or superior in caste, has been alluded to
more than once. I will now make some use of the 564
(Government) Report of the Malabar Marriage Commis- [127]
sion, published in 1894, which contains much information which is extremely valuable to the anthropologist and the folklorist, and none the worse for being found together with views and opinions with which he cannot agree. One of the points to which the Commission directed special attention was "as to the customs connected with Hindu marriages in Malabar" and the evidence collected respecting these may be accepted as correct, and the delineation of existing custom may be taken as authoritative. Now the custom which permits the man to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale than himself prohibits the woman from exercising the same liberty. "This is called the rule of *Anulómam* and *Pratilómam*. Dr. Gundert derives *Anulómam* from *anu* = with + *lómam* = *rómam* = the hair: going with the hair or grain. So *Pratilómam* means "going against the hair or grain." According to this usage a Nâyar woman, consorting with a man of a higher caste follows the hair, purifies the blood, and raises the progeny in social estimation. By cohabitation with a man of a lower division (clan) or caste, she is guily of *Pratilómam*; and, if the difference of caste were admittedly great, she would be turned out of her family to prevent the whole family being boycotted."

A corollary of this custom is that a Nambûtiri [783]
Brâhman father cannot touch his own children by his
Nâyar consort without bathing afterwards to remove the
pollution. The children in the Marumakkattâyam family [851]
belong, of course, to their mother's family, clan, caste.
They are Nâyars, not Nambûtiris; so the Nambûtiri
cannot touch them without pollution.

The rule of *Anulómam* and *Pratilómam* appears to be [184]
observed with the utmost strictness and thoroughness; one finds it obtaining between members of the same clan inhabiting different parts of the country. Mention of this

582 was made on page 83, where it was said that a woman
564 of any clan of North Malabar may not consort with a
184 man of the same clan name belonging to South Malabar.
Following this principle, the man may do so. A woman
of South Malabar (inferior), mating with a man of her
own clan name of North Malabar (superior), would be
following anulômam; but a woman of North Malabar
cannot, under pain of being guilty of pratilômam, mate
with a man of her own clan name of South Malabar.
564 Alliances between the people of North Malabar and
484 South Malabar seem to be extremely rare; partly, perhaps,
because of this custom which is all compulsive,
784 partly because the Nâyar women of North Malabar
[628] cannot cross the river which marks the boundary between
the two. Nor, as said before, can the Nâyar women of
Chirakkal, the northern-most portion of Malabar, cross
the river which lies between it and South Canara to the
northward. Thus, they cannot go beyond their northern
or southern boundaries. The origin of this interdiction
to cross the river southwards has been explained to me
as emanating from a command of the Kólattiri Rajah in
days gone by, when, the Arabs having come to the
country about Calicut (South Malabar), there was a
chance of the women being seized and taken as wives.
An explanation which is somewhat fanciful. The prohibition
to cross the river to the northwards is supposed to
have originated in much the same way, but I have not
564 noted precisely what it is. Again, men of the Kurup
clan of Katattanâd may mate with women of the
582 Nambiyâr clan who live in Kôttayam, but they may not
mate with women of the Nambiyâr clan living in
Chirakkal. The custom imputing superiority or inferiority
to those of a clan inhabiting a certain locality is
obscure; it has its counterpart elsewhere in Malabar.

"Except the Nambûtiri, the Nâyar has no other
793 priestly, spiritual or religious instructor; and it is for the
564 gratification of this Bhú-dévan (earth god) that the Sûdra
woman, if she has any religious instruction at all, is
taught that she was created." We have heard what
Hamilton has said about this (see Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I).
Though the first portion of this statement is not quite
accurate, for we have seen that the priests and religious
instructors of the Nâyars are not admitted to be, strictly
speaking, Nambûtiris, yet on the whole it is not far wrong,
as the Nambûtiri is esteemed as a very exalted person,
and he may ply his music among the Nâyar ladies without
very much restriction. As remarked before, the

writes thus in speaking of the Nâyars :——"When the 581
man visits the woman he lays down his arms at the 585
door; but, if there are no arms at the door, any acquaint-
ance may visit her. To visit the house when there are [201]
arms at the door, or remove them, is death." Now-a-days [178]
a man leaves his shoes outside the door. Equality of the [562]
sexes in all sexual matters, the man and woman being on
terms of equality, having equal freedom, is certainly an
uncommon merit in the Marumakkattâyam system.
Either party may terminate the union—even after one 586
night of hymeneal bliss; and those who are unsuited to
each other sexually, or in the way of temperament, in
fact in any way, may put an end to their union and turn
towards other partners. It may be thought that this
liberty induced perpetual change, so it is as well to state
here that it does nothing of the kind. Mere arbitrary
divorce is very rare. Permanent attachment is the rule. 581
The basis of the system seems to be that the Taravâd 613
estate is held in trust for the support of the females and
of their descendants in the female line. This trust is 421
placed in the hands of the Kâranavan, the senior male
member of the Taravâd who is the legal guardian of
every member of it, and whose control of the Taravâd
property is absolute. The odd feature in the Marumak- [604]
kattâyam system is that a man has his nephews about [591]
him in the house, and not his sons. He lives in one
house, while his wife and family live in another. That [124]
is, in South Malabar; in North Malabar they live
together.

When we come to consider the degrees of relationship 582
within which marriage is prohibited, we find the rule is 613
that persons descended from a common female ancestor
are not at liberty to marry. Those of the same Taravâd
can never intermarry; but this prohibition does not of
course extend to the children of a brother and a sister,
who are naturally of different Taravâds. Again, the
principle that "no member of the Taravâd of a deceased [587]
wife or husband (is) eligible as the second wife or hus-
band is true only as far as the woman is concerned; for
a man may marry a woman of his deceased wife's
Taravâd. But he who does this is not in harmony with
social sentiment." We find this observance amongst the
forest Mûppans of Wynâd. In the case of a man's wife
dying, I found that a Mûppan could not take another
wife from her family.

The rule does not interfere with union between the
children (or their descendants) of a brother and sister

582
613 [171] such children belonging of course, under the Marumakkattâyam system, to different Taravâds. We have seen already, when speaking of the Nambûtiris, that this rule of marriage between the children of a brother and sister, never between the children of two brothers or two sisters, is general throughout Southern India. It seems to be common, though there are exceptions, to the Brâhmans and the peoples commonly called Dravidian, with most of whom it is the most fitting marital union.

-564 553 585 It will be interesting to add here a note on Sambandham as it is amongst the Akattu Chârna, or Akathithaparisha Nâyars (Akattu inside, parisha class),* by one of themselves. The members of this clan being devoted to indoor services, chiefly writing and casting accounts. To those of the sub-clan attached to the Zamorin who were sufficiently capable to earn it, he gave the titular honour "Mênon," to be used as an affix to the name. The title Mênon is in general hereditary, but, be it remarked, many who now use it are not entitled to do so. Properly speaking only those whose investiture by the Zamorin or some other recognized chief is undisputed, they or their descendants (in the female line of course), may use it. Those invested pay a small fee to the Zamorin. A man known to me was invested with the title Mênon in 1895 by the Karimpuzha chief, who in presence of a large assembly said thrice "From this day forward I confer on Krishnan Nâyar the title of Krishna Mênon." Now-a-days be it said, the title Mênon is used by Nâyars of clans other than the Akattu Chârna. Those who belong to the sub-clan who owe Lordship to the Zamorin look to him even now to settle their caste disputes, and for permission to perform the tâlikettu and other important ceremonies. The ceremony to be described is that of this sub-clan.

564 585 178 As the old order changeth giving place to new in the distribution of the honourable affix "Mênon," so too doth it change even in such an important piece of life as marriage, or what under another name means the same thing amongst the Nâyars. It is truly sad to read of celebration of a Sambandham ceremony at Calicut whereat there was cake and wine for the guests, and (shades of all the departed!) a ring for the bride. The departure from national and therefore rational custom, for adoption of that which is neither custom nor cere-

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* For this note I am indebted to Mr. C. P. Raman Menon, B.A., a prominent Police official of Calicut.

564
monial when copied meaninglessly, is surely food for 585
painful reflection. 178

The ceremony to be described is not one of cake and wine, for the doings of people who have reached that bathos have little interest to the anthropologist, though they may have some to the *observer* of social diversions, but the genuine ceremony as done in orthodox fashion in South Malabar without modern adornment will now be described. My informant says in the first place [582] the man should not enter into Sambandham with a woman until he is 30. Now-a-days, when change is running wild, the man is often much less. In [181] North Malabar, which is much more conservative than [184] the south, it was, however, my experience that Sambandham was rare before 27 on the side of the man. And now continue with the Note.* "The Kâra- 585 navan and the women † of his household choose the 564 bride, and communicate their choice to the intending bridegroom through a third party; they may not, dare 613 not speak personally to him in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are informally consulted, and if they [787] agree, the astrologer is sent for and examines the horoscopes of both parties to the intended union. As a matter of course these are found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the Sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes place two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming. There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats, and when on the point of leaving they inform the senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes to have Sambandham with—(naming her), and such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony, the proposal is accepted with pleasure and the party (from the bridegroom's house) returns home."

Preparations for feasting are made in the house of the bride as well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day. To the former all relations are invited for [574] the evening, and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same age as the bridegroom (for elders never accompany him) are invited to partake of food at 7 or 8 P.M. and accompany him to the bride's house. After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the Taravâd),

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* Of which what follows is an abstract.

† My correspondent uses the word "Ladies." I prefer women, a finer word.

765 When the cremation has been done by night, the duty
782 of Sêshakriya (making offerings to the deceased's spirit)
613 must be begun the next day between 10 and 11 A.M. and
is done on seven consecutive days. In any case the time
for this ceremony is after 10 and before 11 and it continues
for seven days. It is performed as follows. All male
members of the Taravâd younger than the deceased go
together to a tank and bathe, *i.e.*, they souse themselves
in the water, and return to the house. The eldest of them,
the man who tore off the strip of cloth from the corpse,
has with him the same strip of cloth and the piece of iron,
and all assemble in the central courtyard of the house,
where there has been placed ready by an Enangan—(one
of the Taravâd—of the same clan or sub-clan as that of
[582] the deceased : marriage must be admissible between the
two Taravâds)—some rice which has been half boiled, a
few grains of gingelly, a few leaves of the cherûla,* some
curds, a smaller measure † of paddy, and a smaller
measure ‡ of raw rice. These are placed in the north-east
corner with a lamp of the ordinary Malabar pattern. A
piece of palmyra leaf, about a foot or so in length and the
width of a finger, is taken, and one end of it knotted; the
knotted end is placed in the ground, and the long end is
left sticking up. This represents the deceased. The rice
824 and other things are offered to this. The belief concern-
826 ing this piece of palmyra leaf is explained thus: There
764 are in the human body ten humours:—Vâyús; Prânan;
774 Apânan; Samânan; Udânan; Vyânan; Nâgan; Kûrman;
Krikalan; Dêvadattan; Dhananjayan. These are called
Dasavâyu, *i.e.*, ten airs. When cremation was done for
the first time, all these excepting the last, were destroyed
[789] by the fire. The last one flew up and settled on a palmyra
leaf. Its existence was discovered by some Brâhman
sages who, by means of mantrams (magic), forced it down
[782] to a piece of palmyra leaf on the earth. So it is thought
[775] that, by making offerings to this (Dhananjayan) leaf for
seven days, the spirit of the deceased will be mollified,
should he have any anger to vent on the living members
826 of the Taravâd.

765 The place where the piece of leaf is to be fixed has
782 been cleaned carefully, and the leaf is fixed in the centre
613 of this prepared surface. The offerings made to it go direct

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[804]

* Ærna lanata belonging to the natural order Acanthaceæ.

† Ari Edangâli : about the size of a quart.

‡ A nazhi : about ½ a pint.

/Information on tests of marriageability required of Tiyyar girls prior to the Tali-tying, will be found in category 588./

Nayar

royal lineage. The retainer sub-castes disputed for rank and, in their separate villages, held 175
the same rights of administration over the lower castes. In all these sub-castes, including 564
the royal lineage, men were trained from the age of seven as soldiers in village gymnasia
headed by military leaders (Asâns), and formed a permanent, mobile militia of the kingdom. 613
Below the retainer sub-castes in rank came the small, non-military Nayar servant sub-
castes of oil-mongers, funeral-priests, washermen, and barbers.[1] Quite apart from these 631
Brahman and Nayar sub-castes, in a separate area of the village lived the lower patrilineal [701]
castes of tenants and menials and the lowest, 'exterior' castes of serfs. [566]

The Nayar Kinship System. The Nayar lineage (*taravâd*) is exogamous and matrilineal kinship
terms are extended throughout its range. Its members are united by the observance of 613
fifteen days' ritual pollution at a birth or death, and traditionally by worship of the spirits [601]
of dead heads of the lineage, and of a group of totemic snakes. The lineage is divided into
small segments, which I call property-groups, each three to five generations deep. Each group [783]
is headed by its eldest man (*kâranavan*) who is the legal guardian of its members and controls [771]
their property.

The property-group was also until recently the dwelling-group. Residence was, and is [769]
still in some houses, uxorilocal: a husband visits his wife after supper and leaves before breakfast. [592]
Traditionally, a woman might have any number of lovers of appropriate sub-caste,
and a man any number of mistresses. This custom of combined polyandrous and polygynous [591]
unions, besides being consistent with a strong matrilineal lineage system, was almost certainly
associated with the occupation of Nayar men as soldiers, since it began to die out shortly after [595]
the armies were disbanded, about 1810, and a hundred years before the lineage showed signs [178]
of disintegration.

The rules of mating were as follows. Sex relations were prohibited within the lineage, 613
and with more than one man or one woman of the same lineage. The Nayar servant sub-
castes of oil-mongers, funeral-priests, washermen, and barbers were endogamous, as were 582
all the lower patrilineal castes and the serf-castes. Within the range of military and ruling
sub-castes (except for the royal lineages which admitted no peers), all unions were permissible 564
outside the lineage and the range of prohibited affines, and within the sub-caste. Furthermore, these sub-castes were knit together by 'hypergamous' unions between women of lower and men of higher sub-caste. Members of the three retainer sub-castes, which disputed for rank, had only temporary and sporadic sex-relations across sub-caste boundaries. These took place during war when soldiers were permitted to contravene the normal rules against dining with or touching members of other retainer sub-castes and might enter each others' houses in order to eat and sleep. More permanent relationships were encouraged between women of the retainer sub-castes and Kiriyattil, Sâmantan, royal, or Nambûdiri men; between Kiriyattil women and Sâmantan, royal, or Nambûdiri men; between Sâmantan women and royal or Nambûdiri men; and between royal women and Nambûdiri men. The royal lineages, acknowledging no others as peers, were obliged to marry all their women upwards and all their men downwards. The Walluvanâd and Cochin princesses married Nambûdiri men, the princes Sâmantan, Kiriyattil, or retainer-women. The Zamorins at first married only some of their women to Nambûdiris, and the rest to men of the more ancient royal lineages of Beypore, Bettem, and Kodungalur, all of whom had been conquered by the Zamorins and made honoured vassals in their kingdom. At some time in the 18th century, the Zamorin's lineage gave up this practice and began to marry its women only to Nambûdiris, while continuing to marry its men to Sâmantan, Kiriyattil, and retainer-Nayar women.

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[1] Respectively called Vettukada, Attikurmis (Chidigans in Cochin), Veluthedans, and Vilakkatalavans. The small temple-servant castes who rank between Nambûdiris and Nayars and were also concerned in hypergamous marriages are for lack of space excluded from this discussion.

Nayar

564 Among Nambûdiris only the eldest son of the patrilineal family might take one or more
582 wives from his caste and beget children for his family. Younger sons might form liaisons
421 only with Nayar women, their children being Nayar by matrilineal descent. Nambûdiri
younger sons, like unmarried Nambûdiri women (of whom there were many), had rights
to maintenance from the ancestral estate but might not divide the property. These customs
ensured the stability of the Nambûdiri estate by preventing it from increasing in numbers
and splitting into segments.

595 In all the matrilineal castes the husband, whether alone or of a group, had none but
[833] sexual rights in his wife and few economic obligations. Sex-relations were called *sambandham*
('joining together'), and were initiated without religious rites. On his first visit the lover
[431] customarily presented the woman with a loin-cloth before her matrilineal kin. He might
also place a sovereign under the pillow before leaving next morning, but neither gift was
[843] obligatory. When a woman became pregnant, she must name one or more men of appropriate
sub-caste as possible fathers: this vindicated her from the charge of cohabitation with a low-
[851] caste man. The men named must jointly meet the expenses of her delivery; their payment
of this sum to the barber-midwife was a public acknowledgment that the child had been
[431] licitly begotten by a man of correct sub-caste. In addition, her lovers provided a woman with
bathing-oil, clothing, and ceremonial gifts of vegetables at the three main festivals of the year.
These payments were a sign of their continued association with her. Beyond this, a lover had
no obligations to his mistress; either of them might stop cohabitation at will.

595 With polyandrous unions, the physiological fatherhood of a child was often unknown.
851 Even when known, the father had no rights in nor obligations to his children. All the current
lovers of the mother were called *acchan* (father) but kinship terms were not extended to their
601 lineage-kin. Though he might play with his children, the father might not dispute their
kāranavan's authority. In hypergamous unions, the higher caste father might not eat in the
564 house of his mistress, and, after taking a bath in the morning, might not touch her nor her
[613] children.

The Nayar Tāli-*Rite*. Though the first *sambandham* of a girl began without ceremony
613 shortly before or after puberty, she must before puberty go through the *tālikettukalyānam*.
This was collectively conducted by the lineage every ten to twelve years for all its immature
588 girls. If a girl matured before the rite was performed, she must theoretically be cast out by
[881] her lineage and banished from her village. In fact, my informants said that in this event, the
first menstruation (normally marked by public rites) would be kept secret by the lineage until
after the *tāli*-rite could be performed.

The central rite of this ceremony was, as in the ordinary marriage of Tamil patrilineal castes and of the Nambûdiris, the tying of a gold ornament (*tāli*) strung on a thread of white silk, round the neck of the girl by a ritual bridegroom (*manavalan*).

613 In the retainer sub-castes the Nayar lineages of a village, or in some cases of a group of
621 villages, formed a local sub-caste group (*tara*). Each lineage was linked by ties of ritual co-
operation to two or more other lineages of the group. These linked lineages were called
564 *enangar*. *Enangar* relations were reciprocal but not exclusive, so that in a group of eight lineages,
lineage A might be *enangar* to B, C, D, and F; B to A, E, and F; C to A, H, and G; E to B,
H, and G; F only to A and B; and H to E, D, and C. A chain of *enangar* relationships thus
indirectly linked all lineages of the local sub-caste group. *Enangar* lineages must send repre-
sentatives to ceremonies of the linked lineage, e.g. the termination of birth and death pollu-
[692] tions and the first menstruation of a girl. *Enangar* must also take note of breaches of caste
law by members of their linked lineages and report such culprits for trial by the *tara* assembly.
613 They were thus the formal links between a lineage and its assembly: they represented the
local sub-caste group (called the *enangu*) to the individual lineages. In ceremonies, they played

Nayar

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a Sanskrit word meaning 'the noble one') the Malayalam word used by Nayars for the *genitor* 184
and all lovers of the mother. The *appan* had no obligations to nor rights in a child except 184
that, at his death, the child observed pollution. Nevertheless, Pālakkara informants stressed 595
that the *appan* was a child's 'real father', as the *tāli*-rite was a woman's 'real marriage'. 851

In Walluvanād and Calicut a different custom prevailed. After the final feast, the couples
repaired to the marriage shed, where each ritual bridegroom tore in two the loin-cloth which 588
had been worn during the three days of seclusion by his bride, retaining one half and handing
the other to the girl. This ritual divorce indicated that the bride, though still in the status 586
of a married woman, was now free to cohabit with whom she wished. She might however still
take as lover the bridegroom who had divorced her. In spite of the 'divorce', the bride and 184
her children observed pollution at the death of the bridegroom. In those lineages where the [765]
tāli was tied by a man of higher sub-caste, no cloth was severed after the rite, but the bridegroom, being an elderly man, was unlikely to cohabit with the girl again. However, she must, with her children, observe pollution at his death.

At some periods and in some areas of South Malabar and Cochin it seems that the ritual 588
bridegroom was forbidden to enter into *sambandham* with his bride. In 1510 Barbosa stated
that the *tāli*-tier was sometimes a 'relation' of the girl, and in this case, when he had tied the 184
tāli, he must go away 'without touching her nor more to say to her on account of being her
relation'. If, however, he was not a 'relation', 'he may remain with her if he wish it, but he is 582
not bound to do so if he do not desire it' (*ibid.* p. 124). Unfortunately, Barbosa did not define
the categories of 'relations' who might tie the *tāli*, but the accounts of all other writers leave no [613]
doubt that the ritual bridegroom could never have been a matrilineal kinsman of the girl.
It is probable that, the *tāli* being tied either by an *enangan* or by some elderly man of higher [114]
sub-caste from which the lineage was wont to draw lovers, the ritual bridegroom might sometimes be a man who had previously had relations with some older woman of the girl's lineage. In this case he would be prohibited from entering into *sambandham* with her by the rule which forbids a man to have relations, serially or concurrently, with two women of the same lineage.

Buchanan, an East India Company doctor, seems to assume that the *tāli*-tier must 588
deflower the bride, but might never cohabit with her thereafter. In 1800 he wrote of South
Malabar Nayars: 'The Nayars marry before they are ten years of age, in order that the girls 833
may not be deflowered by the regular operations of nature; but the husband never thereafter 114
cohabits with his wife. Such a circumstance, indeed, would be considered as very indecent' (Buchanan 1807, p. 411). But Buchanan's account may be untrustworthy, since he later says of North Malabar Nayars: 'The female Nayars, while children, go through the ceremony of marriage, both with Nambouries and Nayars; but here, as well as in the south, the man and wife *never* cohabit' (*ibid.* p. 513; my italics), thus contradicting his earlier statement that the 'bridegroom' must deflower the bride. However, Logan (1887, p. 135), though he does not say whether the *tāli*-tier was expected to deflower the girl, states that in South Malabar
the ritual husband might not solicit his 'wife's' favours in after-life. 588

Since I have not seen the *tāli*-rite, but relied on informants' statements, the above 114
account is necessarily incomplete. I now add details provided by earlier writers.

For Cochin, Anantha Krishna Iyer (1909–12, II, pp. 22–9) reports that in privileged 124
families, the Maharaja gave permission for the rite, and the woman's kin made presents to
him and to important Nambūdiris before it could take place. In retainer-lineages where an 588
enangan tied the *tāli*, the Asān (military leader and, in modern times, schoolmaster) of the
village must be present to give permission, and was paid money and foodstuffs by the woman's 184
kāranavan. Similarly, in a Walluvanād village I visited, the *tāli* was tied in the presence of the 431
desavari, who received gifts for his consent. N. Subramania Aiyar, quoted by Thurston &

588 collapsed and the old system of differential land-rights between Nambūdiris and rulers on
564 the one hand and their Nayar tenants on the other has been seriously undermined. Yet even
today Nayars remark with pride that their lineage has 'fathers' in the lineages of their former
178 landlords and chiefs, while chiefs and royalty alike revere their Nambūdiri *genitors*, and boast
that the blood of these Gods of the earth is running in their veins.

131 PART II. THE NAYAR *Tali*-RITE IN NORTH MALABAR

133 NORTH MALABAR LIES NORTH OF THE KORA RIVER, being the old kingdoms of Kolattiri,
Kurumbrattiri, and Kadattunad. Except for the coast-towns expanded by Europeans, it is
361 sparsely populated and mountainous; part of it is forest. Villages lie separated by hill ranges,
usually as clusters of houses on the hillsides surrounding small wet paddy-flats in the valleys.
[635] This contrasts with South Malabar and Cochin, where the coastal plain is wider, paddy-land
extensive, and settlement usually continuous between villages.

175 Perhaps because of its difficult environment, North Malabar did not before 1792 approach
the degree of political centralization achieved in the central area. The Kolattiri Rajas, it is
631 true, temporarily conquered Kottayam, Kurumbranad, and Kadattunad, but the area was
never consolidated as was the Zomorin's kingdom. Within the small kingdoms, *nāduvaris*
[628] fought each other and rebelled against their Rajas, allying themselves with different rulers
as suited their needs of the moment. Neighbouring *desavaris* sometimes fought each other within
[627] the *nād*, while within the *desam*, *kudipaga* (lineage-feud) persisted till modern times.

Consistent with this lack of political centralization, high-class Nayars were not divided
564 into sub-castes with administrative and occupational functions. Instead they had exogamous
clans, dispersed between many villages. In Kottayam and Kolattunad the bulk of Nayars
631 were Nambiars, independent land-owners owing only nominal allegiance to a chief. *Desavaris*,
613 appointed by the Raja or the *nāduvari*, had administrative powers in their villages but belonged
to the same sub-caste as other Nambiars. In most villages the land was divided between the
423 Nayar property-groups as owners, Nayar tenancies being less common than in the south.
[614] *Nāduvari* lineages, however, usually owned the land in the whole village where they lived,
employed Nambiar tenants as retainers, and claimed superior caste-rank, calling themselves
Samantan Nambiars. Nambūdiri Brahmans are fewer in the north than in the south, especially since the Muslim invasions from Mysore in the 1760s, when many fled to Travancore.
Those who remain live as landlords in widely separated villages, with local Nambiar lineages
as retainers. The Nayar servant castes are spatially distributed as in the south. The lower
polluting castes of manual workers are present in similar proportions, but Tiyyars and their
washermen and barbers are matrilineal in North Malabar, patrilineal in the south.

613 *The Nayar Kinship System*. North Malabar Nayars, though trained in arms in the private
gymnasia of their lineages, were not recruited as a permanent militia of the kingdom. Instead
[701] they cultivated their own lands with the aid of Tiyyar tenants, the serf castes being absent over
[566] most of the area. It seems largely because of this difference of occupation, North Malabar
Nayars are virilocal: a wife moves on marriage to the ancestral house of her husband, and
591 remains with him with rare exceptions till his death. Her children are brought up by their
father and commonly return to their own lineage at puberty. A boy then begins to manage
613 his *taravād* property under the direction of his *kāranavan*, while a girl is shortly afterwards
594 married, from the lineage house, by common consent of her *kāranavan* and her father, often to
[582] the *kāranavan*'s son or to a maternal nephew of the father.

Divorce is permitted, but is rarer than in the south. Polygyny is rare, polyandry even
586 traditionally forbidden. A cuckolded husband formerly cut off the hair of his wife and returned
595 her to her lineage. The *genitor* has customary rights in and obligations to his children. In

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851

Nayar

In addition to maintaining his wife he is expected but not strictly obliged to maintain his children till puberty, though both wife and children may claim maintenance from their lineage as well. Paternal kin are known and accorded kinship terms within a range of three to five generations. Marriage is prohibited between the children of brothers. The *enangar* relationship formerly existed between lineages of the same local group: individual *enangar* represented the group to the lineage at funerals and kept watch over its observance of caste laws. In most rites, however, patrilateral kin and affines filled the the roles filled by *enangar* in South Malabar. 594 213 851 601 582 613

The post-puberty *sambandham* is initiated with ceremonies and feasting, the central rite being the handing of a loin-cloth by the man to the woman in the presence of his age-mates and her kin. After consummation in the bride's house, the couple go to the husband's house where they are ceremonially received by elders. Children must be born in the mother's ancestral house, but paternal kin assert their claims in rites shortly after the birth. Physiological paternity is, of course, seldom in doubt, and sibling-groups refer to themselves proudly as 'the children of such-and-such' [their father's] lineage', for whose members they commonly exhibit greater affection, though less loyalty, than they do for matrilineal kinsmen. 585 851

The Nayar Tāli-*Rite*. Though the North Malabar *sambandham* was a 'real' marriage, the pre-puberty *tāli* rite was conducted as in the south. Unfortunately, I lack details of this rite either from the literature or from informants. Among Nambiars of Kottayam the ceremonies lasted four days and were conducted in a marriage shed, the areca-palm corner-post and the branch of the milk-tree being planted ceremonially as in the south. A temple-servant woman drew a chalk pattern to represent Bhagavadi and made offerings of rice, paddy, and coconuts before it. Before the *tāli* was tied on the first day, men of the temple drummers' caste of Marars,[1] who here rank below Nayars and at their funerals direct offerings to the spirit, placed gold bangles on the upper arms of the 'brides' and addressed them for the first time as *amma* ('mother', or 'married lady'). After the rite, the Marars received the bangles as payment. At a sign from the astrologer, a Nambūdiri Brahman tied the *tāli* for each girl. The couples were secluded for three days and the 'marriage' ended with a ceremonial bath on the fourth day. Unless (as was rare in this area) the Nambūdiri wished to visit the girl as her regular husband after puberty, he might not cohabit with her again. The *tāli*-tier was not called *appan* by the children, nor was he regarded as their ritual father. Children even traditionally observed death pollution not for this ritual bridegroom of the mother but for the *genitor*, at whose funeral rites they played a part only second in importance to the deceased's younger brothers and sisters' children. Informants did not think that the 'bride' observed pollution for her *tāli*-tier's death; she did, however, traditionally observe pollution for her *sambandham* husband unless divorced before his death. 588 [564] [301] [851] [765] [783]

In Samantan Nambiar *nāduvari* lineages, as among Nambiars, the *tāli* was tied by a Nambūdiri. *Sambandham* unions sometimes took place between *nāduvari* lineages of equal rank; more commonly, as in the south, *nāduvari* men married Nambiar women and Samantan Nambiar women married royal or Nambūdiri men. In the ancient Kshattriya lineages of Kottayam and Kurumbranad the *tāli* was tied by a Nambūdiri, and women of these lineages later had Nambūdiris as husbands, the princes marrying 'down' with women of chiefly or village headmen's lineages. The Kolattiri lineage, which is less ancient and not acknowledged to be 'truly' Kshattriya, is said to have been a branch of the Travancore royal lineage which moved its site long ago. Kolattiri women had the *tāli* tied by men of a caste called Koil Tamburans, ancient Kshattriya families of Travancore who had been conquered by the Travancore Maharajas, and some of whom were brought to North Malabar by the Kolattiri 588 613 [564]

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[1] In South Malabar Marars are a temple-servant caste of drummers ranking slightly above Nayars. Nayar funeral rites are conducted by the lower Nayar sub-caste of Attikurssis (Chidigams in Cochin). In North Malabar, Marars rank below Nayars, and conduct Nayar funeral rites, there being no separate subcaste of funeral priests in the north.

Nayar
Tiyyar

588 613 564 [582] Rajas to assist at their ceremonies. Kolattiri women married Koil Tamburan or Nambûdiri men, and Kolattiri men Samantan Nambiar or Nambiar women. In the Kadattunad lineage, which once owed fealty to Kolattiri as an ordinary chiefly lineage, the *tâli* was tied by Kolattiri princes. Women of the lineage married Kolattiri or Nambûdiri men, and men, chiefly women of or village headmen's lineages of their kingdoms.

58 564 182 It is clear that, at least for the 'ordinary' Nambiars who married almost exclusively with each other, the *tâli*-rite was no more than an initiation ceremony giving the girl the status of a married woman. It is fitting that the *tâli* should not be tied by an *enangan*, for, polyandry being prohibited, the girls of a lineage were not married collectively to the local group as a whole. Since the *sambandham* union was permanent, the husband's sexual rights exclusive, and the father accorded legal, ritual, and social rights, it is difficult to explain this rite in terms of social function. It is true, of course, that like all Nayar rites it had the function of identifying the Nayars as a group with customs distinctive from those of other groups. It may also be possible to argue that it gave ritual recognition to the overlordship of Nambûdiris. It was not, however, as in South Malabar, closely in keeping with the political and economic systems, either in the kingdom or the village. Nambûdiri landlords were few, and many Nayars would have to call for the rite Nambûdiris of distant villages to whom they had no relationship as retainers.

613 588 182 Similarly, the *tâli*-rite in the Kolattiri lineage seems to have resulted less from the lineage's bond to the Koil Tamburans, than the reverse: for, if we are to believe informants, the Koil Tamburans were brought from Travancore expressly to perform the *tâli*-rite and assist at other ceremonies of the Kolattiri lineage. I am not prepared to state that the North Malabar *tâli*-rite had no other social function, since I never saw it and the evidence is incomplete. It seems, however, that certain aspects of the rite, both in north and south, cannot be explained in terms of social function but only in terms of psychological motivations. This I defer until I have discussed the place of this rite in the kinship systems of North and South Malabar Tiyyars.

PART III. THE TIYYAR KINSHIP SYSTEM AND *Tâli*-RITE IN NORTH MALABAR

429 621 613 THE TIYYARS FARM LAND leased on short-term tenures from Nayars and live in the low-caste quarters of the same villages. In this area they are matrilineal. Like Nayars, they were organized into *taras*, the hereditary headman (Tandan) of the *tara* being responsible to the *desavari* for the administration of caste law among Tiyyars and the lower castes.[1]

613 [621] [564] [614] [582] Each *tara* might contain ten to twelve Tiyyar lineages and one each of Tiyyar washermen (Vannâns, called Mannâns in the south) and barbers (Kâvutiyyans, called Vâtthis in the south). The Tiyyar lineage, like the Nayar, is exogamous, is united by birth and death pollutions, the worship of a lineage goddess, and snake-worship, and is divided into property-groups each containing a sibling group together with the children and maternal grandchildren of the sisters. The Tiyyars, like the Nayars, have dispersed matrilineal exogamous clans. In this area (but not in South Malabar) Tiyyar men may hypergamously marry women of the Tiyyar barber (but not the washerman) caste.

[591] [422] [423] 000 Tiyyars, like Nayars, are predominantly virilocal. Unlike Nayars, Tiyyar men, having little ancestral property, may remain with the father and build a house on land leased from Nayars near the father's dwelling-group. Though filiation is officially matrilineal, and children retain rights in any land or houses their matrilineal group may own, the *local* descent-group, persisting over three to four generations, is therefore often patrilineal. Polyandry is forbidden,

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[1] I have no information on the *enangar* institution of North Malabar Tiyyars. Dr Aiyappan's (1944, *passim*) discussion of the Tiyyar *enangar* system seems, from my knowledge of Tiyyars, to apply only to patrilineal Tiyyars of South Malabar. In Kottayam informants did not remember the institution which, if it existed, must have died out thirty to fifty years ago

Tiyyar

[North Malabar]

Polyandry is forbidden.

polygyny more common than among Nayars. Symmetrical cross-cousin marriage is encouraged, the mother's brother's son being the rightful husband of a girl. Divorce, however, appears to be much more common than among Nayars and the domestic group less stable, especially in poor families. 595 582 586

For the post-puberty marriage ceremony the bridegroom comes with his parents and elders to the house of the bride. This contrasts with Nayar marriage, where the youth is accompanied by age-mates, the father and maternal uncles being prohibited from attending. This difference reflects the fact that despite virilocal residence and the comparative infrequency of divorce, North Malabar Nayar marriage is theoretically, as in the south, a contract between individuals as sexual partners and not between lineages. Moreover, the absence of the maternal uncles reflects the sexual jealousy between proximal generations in a Nayar lineage. Among Tiyyars, marriage is primarily a contract between families, a domestic arrangement for procuring food and bringing up children, as well as a sexual tie. The bridegroom's father and *kāranavan* jointly give gold to the goldsmith who makes earrings for the bride and places them in the tops of her ears. These rings are the mark of a married woman and are removed at divorce or death. 585 581 [301] [606]

The feast at the bride's house is paid for jointly by the two parties. After it is over, the bridegroom's *kāranavan* pays a bride-price in *panams* (old-fashioned Malayali coins) to the *kāranavan* of the bride. This sum is called *kānam*, the word used for the sum paid by a Nayar or Tiyyar tenant to his landlord at the start of a period of tenure, nowadays fixed at twelve years. The interest on the *kānam* sum is then set off against the annual rent, and returned to the tenant if the property is returned at the end of the stipulated period. The Tiyyar marriage is thus, as Aiyappan (1944, p. 91) says, 'in theory a temporary depositing of a girl by her natural guardian amidst another group from whom a security is received and also an undertaking to take care of her'. The bride's party in return pay a dowry of jewellery and vessels. The bridegroom presents one loin-cloth to the bride and another to her mother. The couple are blessed by elders and depart to the bridegroom's house. 585 583 [613] [427] [581]

The Tiyyar marriage, therefore, is better defined legally than the Nayar. The *kānam* sum (which is of nominal value, in Kottayam fixed at 13½ *panams* or 3 to 5 rupees[1] and paid in the old coins long after their use as currency died out) is, it seems, a symbolic purchase of the husband's *ius in uxorem*. While this persists, he must maintain his wife. Should he lose it by the wife's adultery, his *kānam* sum is returned and his wife goes home with her dowry. In theory, he does not acquire *ius in genitricem* in his wife: this, as in all matrilineal societies, remains with her natal kin. Similarly, the father need not by law maintain his children, though he often does so in fact. These may at any time be returned to their *kāranavan*.

The Tiyyar Tāli-*Rite.* Since the Tiyyar *tāli*-rite died out about twenty years ago, it has been better described in previous literature than by my own informants. I therefore summarize Anantha Krishna Iyer's (1909–12, I, p. 288), Thurston & Rangachari's (1909, VII, pp. 77–9) and Aiyappan's (1944, pp. 159–62) accounts, and then add that of my informants. 588 [178] [127]

The rite must be performed before puberty, on pain of disgrace to the girl's family, and, in ancient times, excommunication from caste. The day was fixed by the astrologer and the ceremony held in the girl's matrilineal ancestral house. The girl was taken to the middle room of the house and secluded for three days as if she had menstruated. Like a menstruous woman, she must abstain from meat and condiments and must not see a tree, a plant, a man, a crow, a dog, or a cat. On the fourth day she bathed in the local pool. At the pool, her brother planted an arrow with its point up, to drive away evil spirits. After bathing, the girl cut a [841]

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[1] Thurston & Rangachari report that the north Malabar *kānam* sum is 41 *panams*; Aiyappan, however, places it between 8 and 99 *panams*. In Kottayam the bridegroom's mother's brother gives 11½ *panams* to the bride's mother's brother and 2 *panams* to her mother's brother's wife.

Tiyyar

[North Malabar]

588 coconut in half, returned amid music, and entered the middle room. The barber woman dressed her and threw rice on her head.

The girl's mother's brother's wife then carried a plank of the milk tree into the marriage
[604] shed, walked round with it three times, and placed it on a mat over rice and paddy. The Tandan of the local group must be present to witness the rites. The mother's brother's wife
[782] and other women, or in some areas the *kāranavan*, led out the girl who, with her face hidden by a cloth, walked three times round and sat on the plank. The barber man instructed her to perform an offering of rice and water to the household lamp and the post supporting the south-east corner of the shed, which had previously been set up by the carpenter with ceremonies at an auspicious time. The girl threw more rice to the cardinal points, the earth, and the sky. Gold and silver coins, salt, rice, paddy, turmeric, charcoal, and pieces of old cadjan leaf from the house-thatch were then tied separately in leaves and placed in a mud pot. The mouth of
[787] the pot was covered with a leaf and tied with string. The girl sprinkled rice over the pot, broke a hole in the lid, and picked out one of the articles, which was examined as an augur of her destiny and of the number of children she would bear. She then twisted off a coconut from a bunch hanging at the corner of the shed. Each of her relatives threw a new cloth over her head. Half of the cloths were given to the barber, who at this point uncovered the girl's face and head and poured coconut water from a leaf of the pipal tree on to a silver and a copper coin which he had placed upon her head. Her *kāranavan* asked the astrologer if the auspicious time had arrived, after which the barber woman handed the *tāli* to the mother's brother's wife who tied it round the girl's neck. The barber woman poured water on the girl's hands: this she threw upwards three times and once each to the cardinal points. A lit cotton wick, steeped in oil, was twisted round a rod of bamboo stuck in a young coconut. The girl was required to look at the sun and at this wick. She then walked three times round a coconut tree in the garden, pouring water at its root. This concluded the ceremonies. Unfortunately, I have no record of whether the girl was further secluded after the rites were over.

[604] Anantha Krishna Iyer (1909–12, I, p. 288) reports that the *tāli* was tied 'either by the maternal or paternal aunt or by the would-be mother-in-law, if the husband for her has
[582] already been selected'. All of these kinswomen (mother's brother's wife, father's sister and husband's mother) are real or potential mothers-in-law because of cross-cousin marriage. My own informants and also Aiyappan state that the rite included an initiation into cookery: the girl was made to grind condiments on a grindstone and to pretend to cook milk porridge before the *tāli* was tied. Aiyappan reports that the barber woman instructed her, and at the end said: 'Prepare sweet porridge, give it to father and mother, and to me, and keep what remains in the *uri*' (a rope support to keep vessels suspended).

This initiation rite, while, like the Nayar one, symbolizing the girl's attainment of maturity and her passage to the status of a married woman, is adapted to the occupation and kinship of Tiyyars. It is significant that to attain 'wifehood' a Tiyyar girl must grind condiments
588 and make porridge – a foreshadowing of her domestic duties as wife.

The mother's brother's wife and the father's sister are preferred mothers-in-law for a
582 Tiyyar girl. The fact that either could be replaced by the actual prospective mother-in-law if the girl were already betrothed proves that they acted in the rite as potential mothers-in-law. The mother's brother's wife is of course suited to become a girl's mother-in-law in a matrilineal system which recognizes strong paternal claims (see Fortes 1953, p. 200). Marriage of her son to her husband's niece mitigates the proverbial conflict between cross-cousins, while
58 cementing the relationship between father and son who frequently live together and co-
605 operate in cultivation. The father's sister's claim is equally strong. In this marriage the boy commonly returns to his mother's brother in his natal house, the girl remaining in her paternal
[593] house where she has been brought up. The matrilineal cross-cousin marriage of a man is

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Tiyyar

[South Malabar and Cochin]

613 must be unrelated: if a man married an *enangar* woman, the *enangar* bond was broken and
each lineage must find new, unrelated *enangar*. *Enangar* must be present to witness marriages,
[769] to help at funerals, and to represent their lineage's ancestral spirits in the ceremonial food-
offerings to spirits on the sixteenth day after, or the anniversary of, a death. The prohibition
[765] on marriages between *enangar* acts as an insurance that the *enangar* should not be prejudiced
by ties of matrilaterial or affinal kinship in their task of bringing to justice members of the
linked lineage who offended against caste law. Among Nayars, this was less likely to happen
because patrilateral ties were less strong than are matrilaterial ties among Tiyyars.

614 Cutting across their lineage-grouping, the Tiyyars had dispersed, exogamous matrilineal
clans, comparable with the clans of the north. My informants knew nothing about these
613 clans except that they were once exogamous. They are not so today, since some people do
582 not remember their clan-names. Though the clans have died out, marriage is prohibited
between known matrilineal kin.

The Tiyyars of this area had fraternal polyandry. In this they must be distinguished
595 from the Nayars, since the Tiyyars banned non-fraternal polyandry, while the Nayars of
Malabar and Cochin forbade the marriage of one woman to two men of the same lineage,
585 not to mention the same sibling-group. Tiyyar fraternal polyandry died out about twenty
years ago. To carry out this marriage, the horoscopes of the girl and the eldest potential
husband were compared and the amount of the dowry of jewels and vessels fixed. The bride-
grooms went to the girl's house with their kin and *enangar*. Their mother's brother handed
clothing for the bride, together with the *kānam* sum as in Norther Malabar, to the mother's
[533] brother of the bride. A learned man sang a marriage formula to the effect that the girl of such
a lineage was here given to the men of such a lineage, with caste-men and the sacred lamp as
witness. He adjured the bridegroom's party to punish her reasonably when necessary, but to
'Keep her well, but if you are displeased with her, bring her back to us even if she has ten
children, and we shall have her back, after settling the accounts in the presence of the third
man [the go-between in marriage arrangements] and the *enangan*.' The bride was seated
in the marriage hall at the end of a row beside her bridegrooms. The bridegroom's mother
and other kinsfolk, and finally their *enangan* and his wife, fed the grooms and then the bride
with porridge and with coconut-milk.

[606] The marriage was consummated shortly afterwards in the bride's house, where each
husband in order of age went to live with her for one or two weeks. At the end of the honey-
moon period she was brought permanently to the husband's house, where she became her
mother-in-law's subordinate. The husbands cohabited with her for equal periods in turn by
the arrangement of their mother. Even a child might be married to the common wife by the
595 milk-tie, and when he grew up claim conjugal rights in his much older wife. If the family were
large and the wife weak in health, a second and even a third woman might, at least in modern
[601] times, be married by all the brothers and shared as their common wife. Children called all the
[428] fathers *appan*, prefacing distinguishing terms. Sons had equal rights of inheritance. The system
mitigated against division of property, but, at least in modern times, if the family became large,
brothers might, on the death of their fathers, divide the property and the children and each
take one of the wives to live with him in middle life.

586 Divorce is permitted: a divorced wife returns to her brother's house, whence she may in theory be remarried. To effect a divorce, the eldest husband traditionally took a piece of thread from his loin-cloth, burnt it in two, and blew the two pieces away, saying to the brother of the girl, 'Here is your sister's *achāram*.' *Achāram* commonly means 'custom', and Aiyappan (1944, p. 184), interprets the phrase, 'Hereby the "thread-tie" [formed by presenting a loin-cloth to the wife at marriage] is snapped, and with it my customary rights over this woman as her husband terminate.' The earnest money was returned to the husband's kin in the

588 On the day fixed the couple dressed in cloths given by the girl's father, and the girl was
led into the hall by her mother's brother and seated on the plank. The boy was carried in
on the shoulders of his mother's brother, borne thrice round and seated to the right of her,
her own mother's brother's wife sitting on her left. The girl's father three times asked the
astrologer if the auspicious moment had come, after which the bridegroom tied the *tāli*.
Aiyappan states that the boy placed the *tāli* round the girl's neck, where it was tied behind by
her mother or her father's sister. Iyer reports that in Cochin, the boy stood behind the girl
and tied it himself. The couple were given a sweet drink as at a normal marriage. The girl
was then secluded for three days with the new loin-cloth which the boy had worn kept always
beside her. On the fourth morning, the couple bathed together and were taken to worship
[184] at the temple. In South Malabar, though not in Cochin, the loin-cloth was then taken from
the girl's room and cut in two, as at the divorce in a Nayar rite. The bridegroom then took
[586] a thread of it and, as at a normal divorce, snapped it saying to the girl's brother, 'Here is your
[613] sister's *āchāram*.' He departed taking the two pieces of cloth and a few rupees paid by the girl's
family. As among Nayars, a whole *taravād* might hold the ceremonies for all its immature girls,
separate bridegrooms then being required for each.

184 This ceremony, more clearly than the North Malabar Tiyyar one, is a mock-marriage
of the girl to a vicarious husband. It would be less appropriate for the mother's brother's
588 wife or the father's sister to tie the *tāli* in this group, since cross-cousin marriage, though
[582] preferential, is not enjoined to the extent which it is in the north. Even so, the mother's brother's
wife, perhaps as potential mother-in-law, performs preliminary rites. On the face of things,
however, it seems extraordinary that in this group where the marriage bond is strong, father-hood
known within a group of brothers, inheritance patrilineal, and the wife at least partly
incorporated into the lineage of her husband, such a rite should be performed at all. It is
significant that the Tiyyar *tāli*-tier does not take over the role of ritual father to the woman's
children by her later husbands, nor does he in any sense remain a husband to the woman.
[765] Unless she is married to him after puberty, neither the girl nor her children observe pollution
for his death nor use kinship terms for him. This difference between South Malabar Tiyyars
[601] and Nayars befits the difference between Nayar matriliny with its denial of the social aspect
of physiological paternity, and the Tiyyar patrilineal lineage system with its emphasis on the
[613] legitimacy of children. But why did the Tiyyars perform the rite at all? Since they themselves
have no answer to this question, except that it was part of ancient custom, we are driven to
look for an explanation in terms of unconscious motivations.

PART V. INTERPRETATION OF THE *Tāli*-RITE

184 THE CEREMONIES VARY IN DETAIL but have certain features in common (see Chart I). The
588 rite must in all cases be performed before puberty, and is always a symbolic defloration.
This is most clear in the royal lineages, where the bridegroom actually deflowers the girl.
831 Among South Malabar Nayars, the aggressive approach of the bridegroom's party suggests
a sexual attack, as does the action of the bridegroom who places his sword across his lap
before tying the *tāli* on the bride. When, on the fourth morning, the bridegrooms force open
the shut doors of the girls' lineage house, it is clear that they are, as strangers, making an
aggressive entry into the *taravād*, i.e. symbolically deflowering its women.

In all the ceremonies other ritual acts make it clear that the rite is a symbolic defloration. The lit wick, arrow, sword, coconut tree, staff, sun, sky, peacock-feathers, the corner-post of the marriage-shed and the bamboo rod stuck in a coconut are readily recognized as phallic symbols recurrent in South Indian ritual; while paddy, rice, coconut inflorescence, rouge-bottle, bell-metal mirror (worshipped in temples as symbol of Bhagavadi), mud pot of water,

Nayar
Tiyyar

588 rank, above the political system of the kingdom, and, in religious belief, the representatives
of God on earth. All of these father-figures are collectively physiological fathers of the Nayars,
182 so that in summoning them to deflower their women the Nayars call in real or classificatory
564 fathers as well. When the bridegroom is a higher caste man, moreover (as when Tiyyar barbers
call an elder of their caste), his venerable age leaves no doubt of his paternal role.

That the ritual bridegroom should be a father-figure to the community explains my informants' memory that the Asan might deflower Nayar women, but might prefer to forgo his right for money paid by some other bridegroom. It explains why the *desavari* must be present to give permission for the Nayar rite (and the Tandan for the Tiyyar rite) and receive money 'as if to recompense him'. The preliminary gifts by the high-caste Nayar girl's family to Nambûdiri landlords, the *nâduvari* and the Maharaja also bear out this hypothesis.

Among South Malabar retainer-Nayars and among Tiyyars a high-caste father-surro-
588 gate could not be obtained, so that 'they must perforce supply the priest's place themselves'.
184 The retainer-Nayars get round this by selecting an *enangan* to represent the whole caste,
who was deputed for the task by village elders and, supernaturally, by the position of the
182 stars at his birth. Even so, the hazardous nature of the rite is indicated by the need to perform
787 it at an auspicious time, when the astrologer (in some respects another father-figure since,
though of lower caste, he was traditionally the trainer of Nayar boys in their village gym-
nasium, and a priest of Bhagavadi) gave the word.

588 Among North Malabar Tiyyars the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister might
tie the *tâli*. She does this on behalf of her son, who is the proper husband for the girl, and before
604 the marriage-pole and the sacred household lamp (divine phallic symbols). In this caste
it is fitting that some kinsman or kinswoman of the bridegroom should perform the rite, because
184 Tiyyars are not polyandrous and a girl becomes temporarily incorporated at marriage into
182 her husband's dwelling group. Yet, if we assume the Oedipal fear, the Tiyyar bridegroom
could not tie the *tâli* himself, since he is (ideally and often) a cross-cousin. If he is the mother's
brother's son, he takes the girl, in this group where paternal claims offset matrilineal, from
her *kâranavan* and his own father, a terrifying situation in view of his unconscious Oedipal fears.
If he is the father's nephew, he takes her from her father and his own *kâranavan*, an equally
dangerous situation. The problem is surmounted by permitting the mother's brother's wife
or the father's sister of the girl to 'marry' her on behalf of her son.

564 The substitution of the barber-woman to tie the *tâli*, and the role of the barber as one
intimately associated with the girl's passage to womanhood, may perhaps be understood
[588] by considering the general role of barbers in Tiyyar social life. The barbers cut hair for
Tiyyars, and in South Malabar though not commonly in the north, their women are mid-
[305] wives. They rank parallel to the Tiyyar washerman with whom they are compared, since
both castes have polluting occupations but take part in the rites of birth, girls' puberty, and
[759] death. In North Malabar Tiyyar men may marry barber women hypergamously, their
children being barbers by matrilineal descent. Barbers are thus socially and sometimes
[582] physiologically the 'sons' of Tiyyars. They are also likened by the Tiyyars to their younger
brothers. Barbers may not give food to Tiyyars but must attend Tiyyar feasts, when they
sit on the left or 'younger' side of the feasting hall, the Tiyyars sitting on the right or 'older'
[693] side. Barbers address Tiyyar men as 'elder brother', but Tiyyars address older barber men by
name, as they do juniors of their own caste. Despite his low rank, however, the barber is in
[584] some situations a paternal figure for Tiyyars. He assists the Tandan in his executive functions
and may summon Tiyyar offenders to caste justice. An elderly barber is often a marriage-
[793] broker for Tiyyars, but he is primarily a priest for Tiyyar household rites. At a Tiyyar death
he instructs the heirs to make offerings to the spirit, in the form of a mud image which he
[782] makes. On the fourteenth day, he purifies the household by anointing its members with oil
[783]

606 601 as *Ammari Amma*, the first word being the same as the wife of the mother's brother, and the second an honorific addition to it. Dr. Rivers, in *Kinship and Social* 601 606 114 *Organisation*, as well as in *Melanesian Society*, has conclusively shown that wherever first-cousin marriage prevails, there the mother-in-law has no special name. His explanation that this is due to the obvious fact that, in most cases, the mother's brother's wife is the same person as the mother-in-law, and that the former position was antecedent to the latter, is fully borne out by the terminology among the Nāyars.

601 604 Another relation of importance in the Nāyar family life is the father's sister. She has a special name and has a very special function to perform. In Middle Travancore she is called *Appachi*. Her importance varies according to the status of the father's family. If the father's family is one of greater importance than one's own, then the father's sister is a person to be consulted on various matters with regard to the child. In any case she should be the first to visit the new-born child. This is called "*Kannom Kalcha.*" In the marriage ceremony also she has a prominent place.

613 621 *Enangar.*—The whole of Nāyar family life used to be based, though this has decayed of late, on the close relationship with one or more other families, spoken of as *Enangar* or Allies. A *Tharawad* with its *Enangars* formed *a social group* rarely marrying outside its fold and generally arranging all festivities and ceremonies between themselves. Neither funeral rites, nor marriage ceremony, nor even any one of the hundred other minor things which go to make up the ordinary life of a Nāyar family, can take place without the co-operation, or at least the presence, of [564] [264] a member from the *Enangar* or allied families. The *Enangar* families are always of the same sub-caste, with a right to eat with you and enter any part of your house.

613 621 582 178 The *Enangar* system is evidently a kinship organisation, forming an intermarrying class. The question of its origin is a very difficult one. The prevalent opinion is that it originated in the days when Nāyars fought and farmed in alternate months, when a kinship organisation of some sort was very necessary for safety and success. This organisation has become very lax of late, though it cannot in any way be said to be dying out.

● 582 *Marriage Restrictions.*—The marriage restrictions prevalent among the Nāyars have nothing much peculiar from the rest of the Hindu society. The bride must always be younger than the man, and must in strict orthodoxy belong to the same generation as his. He may not marry his mother's sister's daughter, who is to him as his own sister. All his sisters, own and collateral, together with ladies of a previous generation in his family, form a legal incestuous group. A man has, therefore, to marry either entirely out of the circle of his relations, or from among his *cross-cousins*.

Cross-cousin marriage[1] is the orthodox custom. Your maternal uncle's

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[171] [1] By cross-cousins I mean children of brother and sister. The relationship is expressed by the word *Machuna*, which is, it should be noticed, the same as in the Toda language. Among

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 **AW11 Kerala AW11**
Nayar
Malabar Brahmins

582 daughter never calls you by any name which, in the Hindu code of manners, is done only with regard to the husband. She is your *a priori* wife, if such an expression could be used. She is spoken of as the *Mura Pennu* (*Mura* = customary, and *Pennu* = female or wife, meaning customary wife).

582 564 Unlike other Hindus a Nāyar may marry a girl from a lower sub-caste as long as she also is a Nāyar. He cannot marry a woman whose caste is higher than his own without the wife losing her caste. A Nāyar lady can choose her husband either from among the allied families or others, provided they are of the same or superior sub-caste. Also, she can marry from anyone of the higher castes, *i.e.*, either from the Brahmins or from the Kshatriyas. The alliance between the Malabar Brahmins and the Nāyars is a social fact of very great interest. In no other part of India is a Brahmin allowed to marry out of his own caste. In Malabar, on the other hand, among the Nambudiris or the Aryan immigrants, only the eldest member of the family can marry among the Brahmins, the others being forced to marry among the Nāyars. The permanence through ages of matrilineal descent among the Nāyars is due to this fact. The Brahmins, being of a superior caste, and the Nāyar wife of the Brahmin being unable to live in her husband's family, the system tended to be matrilineal as well as matrilocal. Also, since the children of such a marriage are Nāyars and not Brahmins, though the father is a Brahmin, the system remained wholly unilateral without any definite bilateral development. It is only the very highest among the Nāyars that have connection with the Brahmins. Through their influence the custom preserved all its strength in the lower classes as well.

428 564 582 The peculiar custom of the Malabar Brahmins of not allowing their junior members to marry among their own caste introduces a complication into the Nāyar system. The idea underlying such a prohibition is evidently the preservation of the big estates which the Nampudiris own. Since the Nāyar sons of the Malabar Brahmins do not inherit anything from their fathers, their estates remain undivided and descend only to the eldest son. Primogeniture has been the custom in every country where the preservation of big landed property in the hands of a few was aimed at. The undivided family among the Nāyars is also meant to conserve their possession of the land and maintain the political influence resulting from it. A point of utmost importance which should always be kept in mind in this connection is the interaction of economic and social forces. The interest of the Nampudiris to keep their property undivided led to their custom of primogeniture, and this again induced them to use their temporal power and sacerdotal influence to perpetuate the matrilineal system among the Nāyars. Also, the desire to preserve the family estates as a whole, kept the Nāyar families from being divided, making thereby a change to patrilineal system altogether impossible.

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the Todas also *Machuna* (or cross-cousin) marriage is the orthodox custom. See p. 512, Rivers, *The Todas*. Also Appendix, "Similarities between the Nāyars and the Todas." 582 171

595 It is a point very keenly debated as to how far polyandry was prevalent among the Nāyars in olden days. During the last fifty years no trace of such a system has been found. It is to a certain extent true that there is extreme instability of marriage [538] relationship among the commoner folk even now. But for a woman to have more than one husband at a time *seems to have been against the moral ideas of the community even two hundred years ago.*[1] Nāyar ballads and poetry of that age contain many passages where polyandry is spoken of as a barbarous and unknown custom.

But though strict polyandry does not seem to have existed at any time, traces of a *system of supplementary spouses*, very much like the Pirauru custom among [613] the Australians, exist even now. In the *Enangar* or allied families, which we have [621] noticed before, any woman of the same generation and in the same relationship as cross-cousin is eligible for marriage, and even if she is married, the young man [582] whose spouse she might have been has certain rights—not distinctly conjugal, but still pertaining to it. He is the one who avenges her against insults. Her children call him "little father," and he has the right of entering any part of her apartments. Among the commoner folk a system of conjugal relationship may still exist. It is practically certain that this is a survival of the system of *supplementary spouses* such as we have in Australia and other places.

562 In this connection it may be interesting to notice the general position of women in Nāyar society. On *a priori* grounds we are inclined to assume that the position of women in matrilineal communities is higher than in patrilineal societies of the same standard of culture. How strongly this opinion is held will be seen from the fact that even in other parts of South India Malabar is spoken of as the "Land where women rule." It is impossible to make a general statement as to the relative status of women in matrilineal and patrilineal communities. But as far as the Nāyars are concerned, their women enjoy equality with men. They can hold property [871] in their own right and enter the professions they choose. Traditions of scholarship and art are, perhaps, stronger among them than among men. Some of the best [875] Malayalam poets and scholars have been Nāyar women, and at the present day the statistics of female education show a higher percentage of English-educated girls among them than among any other Indian community. All the girls' schools in Travancore are manned by them, and some of them hold such high administrative posts as inspectorships of girls' schools.

595 Polygamy was indeed prevalent, and is still legally permitted among the Nāyars.
562 But this, in my opinion, does not show an inferiority of status. Though the opinion of Nāyar women would strongly be against the wife of the Akikuyu chieftain who told Mrs. Routledge that she would like her husband to have as many wives as possible,[2] there is no reason to believe that the possession of more than one wife

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[1] See Note 3 at the end. Appendix on "McLennan and the Nair Type of Polyandry."

[2] Among a Prehistoric People (Akikuyu).

583 182 174 cast off one husband and choose another, the religious rites of marriage had to be performed without any definite marital relationship with any particular man. This seems to be the explanation of *Talikettu Kalyanam.*

582 564 585 The real marriage *de jure* and *de facto* is the *Sambandham.* "*Sambandham*" is a Sanskrit word, meaning good and close union. A Nāyar girl can have *Sambandham* not only with a Nāyar man, but with Brahmins and Kshatriyas. As a matter of fact the whole system of Nāyar customs seems to have been regulated to suit the purpose of the Nampudiri Brahmins. It must be remembered that a very strict system of primogeniture is prevalent among the Nampudiris, and only the eldest male member in a Nampudiri family marries from among his own caste. Only in case the eldest has no issue, or is incapable of having any, is it that one of his brothers gets the chance to marry in his own community. Generally, therefore, the younger [554] sons of a Nampudiri family marry among the Nāyars. It must also be remembered that it is considered an honour reserved only for the highest Nāyar families to be allied to Nampudiri families by marriage.

585 The *Sambandham* customs are of the simplest nature. If the suitor is a Brahmin he goes and tells the *Kārnavan* of his desire to marry the girl. The *Kārnavan* then consults the astrologer for an auspicious date, and informs the village elders. The Brahmin brings some *Pudakas* (*i.e.*, clothes which the wife wears) and hands them over to the girl in the presence of her relations and the neighbours, and it is duly announced that they are married.

[582] If the suitor is a Nāyar he is generally the girl's father's sister's son. As we have said before, this is considered to be the most proper marriage. In this case it must be remembered the head of the suitor's family approaches the girl's uncle with a proposal that such marriage is eminently desirable, and the *Kārnavan* informs all the necessary people, and the *Pudaka* is given without much ceremony. It is when a stranger wants to marry in the family that all the formalities have to be gone through. Then all the village and all people in any way related are informed and, in the case of rich families, invited to a feast on the auspicious day. After an elaborate and sumptuous meal the village headman and family elders assemble in a hall. A lighted lamp is placed in the middle, and before it a plantain leaf with rice, betel-nut, lemons and spices. The bridegroom is ushered in here nearly half an hour before the ceremony, and he comes accompanied by some members of his family and the chief men of his village. There is a sort of social reunion for some time, and when the auspicious moment arrives, the bride, accompanied either by her mother (or, in some parts, by her mother's brother's wife) enters and approaches the bridegroom. In ordinary cases the bridegroom stands up and takes the clothes which some of his party had brought for him and gives them to the bride. In some cases the uncle of the bridegroom gives them to the mother of the girl.

The ceremony is now supposed to be over. The bride retires with her mother, and for some time a general conversazione, including sometimes recitals of odes,

vocal music, etc., goes on. One by one the guests soon depart, and the bridegroom 585
stays in his wife's house for a few days. It must be remembered that the Nāyars [591]
are a strictly matrilocal community, though the custom shows a laxity in these days. [178]

The *Sambandham* customs are not the same all over Malabar. They vary [184]
considerably in details, but the principle is the same all over. *Sambandham* in
itself, though recognised as legal, has not the binding effect of a proper marriage. [581]
It is in theory dissoluble at will, and often it happens that, due either to misunder- 586
standing or quarrel, either of the parties breaks off relations. In such a case, the
marriage is deemed to have ended, and the aggrieved party can, without further
formality, marry anybody else. The legal position is slightly altered in Travancore. [648]
By the Nāyar Regulation Act of 1912 it was enacted that if a man wants to break
off his marriage relations with a woman to whom he was united by a properly con-
ducted *Sambandham* he has to give her six months' notice and provide for the
maintenance of her children by him (till they attain their twelfth year, unless the
mother marries in the meantime). But this law has very little influence, and
marriages and divorces go on in the same free fashion as before. In British Malabar, 581
there is the Malabar Marriage Act of Sir C. Sankaran Nayar, the present Educational
Member of the Imperial Government, by which a Nāyar entering into a *Sambandham* [648]
with a Nāyar woman can, if the parties choose to do so, register their union as a
marriage to which ordinary marriage laws apply. This has been found very
ineffective, for in the last twenty years during which it has been in force only six
marriages have been registered, and all of them have been in the family of its
distinguished author.

Before such laws came to be enacted (and to a very great extent even now) 582 ●
there has been singular freedom of marriage and divorce among the Nāyars. The
men that a girl could possibly marry were strictly restricted by certain conditions.
A Nāyar girl is not allowed to contract a marriage with men of a lower subcaste. [564]
She can marry either in her own subcaste or in castes above hers. She is not allowed
to marry one who is not at least two years older than herself. She cannot marry any-
one who shares pollution with her (that is descended from the same ancestress on the
maternal side, however remote). There are cases when the common ancestress
lived nearly four hundred years ago, but still her descendants are supposed to be so
closely related in blood as to preclude matrimonial relationship of any sort.

The husband visits the wife's house after dinner, and this does not cause any 591
particular inconvenience, as, till lately, marriage was restricted to people of one's [582]
own village or of its immediate neighbourhood. But in these days the tendency is [178]
strongly patrilocal, though ancient and aristocratic families still refuse to send their
ladies out of the house. To keep within one's own house is considered to be a
specially aristocratic privilege.

The question of polyandry among the Nāyars is a much debated point. This 595
can be said with certainty: there has been no authenticated case of it at least for
The last fifty years.

Note 3.—McLennan and the Nāyar Type of Polyandry.

McLennan, in his well-known book, *Studies in Ancient History*, divides polyandry 595
into two classes, and calls one the Nair type and the other the Tibetan type. "It 114
is in the nature of the cases," says he, "that all the possible forms of polyandry must lie between the Nair and Tibetan forms." A good deal of what McLennan says about the Nāyar customs is vitiated by the unsatisfactory character of the information at his disposal. Buchanan, on whom he chiefly depends, made a journey through Malabar, and his account is wholly untrustworthy. The loose character of the sexual tie and the licentious habits of the richer Nampudiri landlords, as far as their immediate Nāyar tenants were concerned, were naturally enough interpreted as polyandry by foreign observers. As a matter of fact distinct polyandry of any type was very rare in Malabar except among the Kāniyāns (or the astrological caste) and among them it is of the Tibetan type.

If there existed any tendency towards polyandry among the Nāyars it was not certainly towards what McLennan calls the "Nair type." The wife of a brother is looked upon as a person to whom one could openly though not legitimately pay court; and any favour short of sexual relationship which she confers upon him is allowed by public opinion. A wife, for example, is the only woman who is allowed to smear oil on a man's back; and when a woman does it to a man it is considered to be a sort of semi-marital function. A man can always ask his brother's wife to do it for him, and it is done very often, even in the presence of the brother. Such
customs are, however, open to two interpretations. As we have seen elsewhere, [582]
the *Machuna* marriage (or the marriage of cross-cousin) is the orthodox form of marriage among the Nāyars. To all the brothers alike the girl stands in the same relation before the marriage. *She could have been, in fact, the wife of any of them,* provided she was not older than her cousins. Even after her marriage with one of them this potential relationship continues to exist, and therefore all the brothers treat her "half as a sister and half as a wife."[1]

Or, it may be explained, that such relationship is a survival of a Tibetan type of polyandry among the Nāyars. It may be argued that these semi-marital functions which all the brothers can claim from each others' wives, prove the prevalence in a former time of a community of marriage relationship among the brothers. This does not seem to me to be true. Nāyar tradition gives no support to this view. We have no Nāyar stories that speak of one woman who was the common wife of her cross-cousins. In fact we have no tradition of any polyandry at all. Nevertheless, we find McLennan giving the Nair name to a particular type of polyandry supposed by him to be practised universally among them.

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[1] It has been argued by Spencer and Gillen that the system of supplementary spouses affords definite evidence of a system of group marriage in a previous age. Their inferences on this subject have now been subjected to very damaging criticism, especially by Mr. N. W. Thomas, *Kinship and Marriage in Australia*, pp. 111-141.

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the highest class. There are many who profess to belong to certain Nambuthiri *illams*, such as the Azhavancheri and other *illams*. They are obliged to be strict vegetarians owing to their service in the Nambuthiri families.

[357] 3. *Swarupattil Nayars.*—The members of this class render services to the Kshatriyas. There are, it is said, three minor subdivisions, namely, *Pindiyánmar, Patindluvättukar* and *Chitayans*. The members of the first class serve as menials in the houses of Kshatriyas; those of the second have to supply them with everything necessary for the performance of all kinds of ceremonies; and those of the third serve them during pollution. They appear to correspond to the Chàrnavar and Sudras. Swarupattil Nayars or Swarupakkár (from *swarupam*, princely house) are so called because of their service in princely houses or Kshatriya families. They are next in rank to *Illakkars*.

[167] 4. *Agattu and Purattu Charna Nayars.*—The Chárna Nayars or Chàrnavar who are mostly immigrants from Malabar include the two subdivisions, Agattu Chárnavar and Purattu Chárnavar, "inside and outside retainers," respectively. There are two explanations of the terms. According to one, the Purattu Chárnavar are the armed retainers of the various chieftains, while the Agattu Chárnavar are the personal and domestic servants. According to the other explanation, the distinction refers to their position at *yágams* (sacrifices) at which it is said that various duties inside the *yágasala* or sacrificial pandal are to be performed by the Agattu Chárna Nayars, while the Purattu Chárna Nayars remain on guard outside. In point of social precedence, the Purattu Chárnavar are ranked superior to the Agattu Chárnavar, probably because the latter do not belong to any of the fighting clans. A woman of ● [582] the former may mate with a man of the latter, but not *vice* [264] *versa*. Only the men of the two subdivisions may eat together, but the women may mate with men of their own clan or of any other or with a Nambuthiri. The men of this class form *sambandhams* in South Malabar with the Kiriyattil women. The caste-men affix the title of Nayar after their names. There are many of this class found in the State.

[451] 5. *Menókki and Pattóla Menon.*—Men of these castes serve as accountants in temples and in aristocratic families,

564 13. *Anduran Nayars.*—These Nayars are the manufacturers of earthenware for use in temples.

14. *Attikurusi Nayars.*—They are the priests who officiate at funeral ceremonies for all sub-castes above them.

In respect of the fourteen subdivisions of the high caste *Sudrás*, it must be said that the non-military classes, namely, the Otattu Nayars, Chempukotti, Anduran, Pallichán and [264] [582] Vattékád Nayars, have to be treated as an intermediate class of *Sudrás*, because there is neither interdining nor intermarriage between the members of these subdivisions and those treated as high caste *Sudrás*; but they are classed among the high caste *Sudrás* on account of their services in temples, which give them the privilege to enter them and bathe in public tanks.

Under the head of low caste Sudrás are included four sub-castes, namely Tharakans, Velakkathalavans, Veluthédans, and Chálivans, who pollute other Nayars by touch, and who are on that account called low caste Sudrás. Pollution by touch appears to be the basis for the above classification, and on this principle, the three castes except the Tharakans are treated as low caste *Sudras*; for, their touch pollutes all castes above them. The Tharakans had been a trading class, but they have now taken to other professions. They are a Tamil class and are the least Malayáli to be brought on a level with the high caste Sudrás, though in their customs they are almost like the latter. A similar process of assimilation has been and is still going on among some of the Tamil castes of the Chittur Taluk as well as elsewhere, by which the members of such castes are developing themselves into Nayars.

553 554 Titles. The Nayars affix to their names one of the following titles, the origin and significance of which are given below:—

1. *Kartha.*—The word means a 'doer', and appears to have been used as a title by some of the old Madura kings. The rulers of Cochin are said to have confirmed this title on some influential Nayar families, and made them petty chieftains subject to their paramountcy. All the Karthás belong to the *Illam* division of the Nayar caste. Among the old families in the Cochin State still possessing this title are Chéránellur [551] Kartha near Ernakulam, Kódasséri Kartha near Chálakudi, and Kuzhupilli Kartha.

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554 Malabar, where it is a creation of the Zamorin.

7. *Asán.*—The word means a teacher. He is also a head-man (*Karayinmél Asán*), who has certain social functions in connection with the marriage and other ceremonies.

8. *Achan.*—The word means father. It is the title of the Palghat Rajas, the ministers of the Calicut and Cochin Rajas (Mángát Achan and Páliyat Achan), and also of several other old Nayar chiefs.

9. *Mannátiyar.*—This is the title of certain aristocratic families in the Chittur Taluk near Palghat. The word is derived from *man*, earth, and *nétiyavar*, earners.

Marriage prohibitions.

564 582 833 783 Among the high caste Sudras marriage is hypergamous, while the low caste Sudras are endogamous. This is the general rule, though exceptions may sometimes be found. A Nayar is allowed to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale than himself, but his womenkind are prohibited from exercising the same liberty. This is called the *Anulómam* and *Prathilómam*. Dr. Gundert derives *Anulomam* ' from *Anu* with *lómam* *rómam* the hair, going with the hair or grain. So *Prathilómam* means going against the hair or grain. According to this usage, a Nayar woman, consorting with a man of the higher caste, follows the hair, purifies the blood, raises the progeny in social estimation. By cohabitation with a man of lower subdivision, clan or caste, she is guilty of *Prathilómam*; and if the difference of caste were admittedly great, she would be turned out of her family to prevent the whole family being boycotted.[1]

564 582 783 The rule of *Anulómam* and *Prathilómam* is everywhere observed with great strictness. In many cases, Nambuthiris, Embráns, Póttis and Tamil Brahmans, Kshatriyas and

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[784] [562] [484]

[1] Alliances between the people of North Malabar and South Malabar seem to be extremely rare. It is partly because of the principle of Prathilomam and perhaps partly that the Nayar women cannot cross the Korapuzha which marks the boundary between the two. Nor can the women of the extreme north of North Malabar cross the river between it and South Canara. The reason is said to be that the Kolatheri Raja so commanded owing to the fear that was entertained about their being captured and taken as wives by the Arabs. Similarly, till about fifty years ago the Nayar women from North Travancore and Cochin were prohibited from going beyond Quilon southward. These customs are being overlooked by the educated members of the community and it may almost be said that the custom has begun to die out.

Further, in the extreme south of South Malabar a high caste bride mates with a low caste bridegroom on the Prathilomam already explained. The husband cannot touch her without pollution, when she is engaged in taking meals. In the case of Nambuthiris, the same custom is in force and they cannot be seen, while engaged in religious ceremonies or taking meals. With the spread of education, official status, wealth, power, and influence, many of these time-honoured customs are fast disappearing.

Ambalavásis form alliances with Nayar women, but the 564
latter and their children cannot touch their husbands and 582
fathers without polluting them. The children of this union 783
belong to the mother's family. In the clan system, descent was at first reckoned in the female line; consequently, uterine ties alone constituted kinship. The father was not regarded as related even to his children, and not considered as a member of the family. In this system all the children bear the clan name, and the clan name becomes the test of blood relationship. But the moment the descent is recognised through the male, the clan system breaks down. Among the Nayars the kinship is still reckoned through the female line.

Marriage is endogamous among the low caste Sudrás. 564
The following restrictions are however in force among all classes 582
of Sudrás. There cannot be intermarriages between the descendants of any female ancestor. It is strictly prohibited even [614]
in the case of two persons belonging to the same *taravid* or family whose relationship cannot be traced to its origin, but is only traditional. A man cannot marry the sister of his deceased wife. The custom is more changing. A man cannot marry from the family of his deceased wife, but is now limited to the *thdvazhi* to which his wife belonged. Even this is now being overlooked.

CHAPTER II.

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THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

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A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS)

(Continued).

● 582 According to Nayar ideas the most desirable bride for a young man is the daughter of his maternal uncle.

588 585 **Marriage customs.** There are two forms of marriage in vogue among the Nayars, namely, the *Thálikettu kalyánam* (*táli* tying ceremony), and the *Sambandham* (the customary nuptial union of man and woman), the first of which is performed for every girl before puberty, and the second, the real adult marriage, is celebrated after she comes of age. The *táli* tying for every girl is compulsory before she arrives at maturity,[1] and the omission or neglect of it
[688] will place her and her family under a ban: for, it is considered
= a religious impurity for a girl to attain puberty before the
[782] performance of this ceremony. There is however a tendency for these restrictions to be overlooked now-a-days.

588 In every *taravád* or family, the ceremony is performed once in ten or twelve years, and all the girls down to the baby in the cradle, who have not already undergone this ceremony, are married in this fashion for the sake of economy. When, in a family, the *táli* tying ceremony has to be performed for a girl or a number of girls, the *káranavan* or senior member thereof, at a meeting of the friends and relatives of
[787] the family, sends for the local astrologer, who after examining
— the horoscope or horoscopes of the girl or girls determines the auspicious hour for it as well as for certain subsidiary rites

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[784] [1] As a rule, the tali tying ceremony is performed before the girl attains puberty, but sometimes it is performed afterwards. In the latter case, the girl is prohibited from entering temples during the period intervening between the attainment of puberty and the tali tying ceremony.

881 she bathes with her friends. The same party return home in procession, when the *Bráhmani* entertains the party with her music. In the afternoon, the girl is seated in a pandal put up in front of the house, where the Vélans continue the songs, which are *Puranic*, and the assembled guests who are chiefly the women of the village as also those of their friends and relatives present the washerman, each with a piece of cloth. They are entertained at a sumptuous feast held that day; after which the assembled party break up, taking leave of the host. In some places, the girl is taken to a separate house on the fourth day for the bath; whence she returns to her house in procession together with the beating of drum and joyous shouts. [184] In the northern parts of the State, the Vélan's songs are at night, and the performance of the ceremony is compulsory on the fourth day. In the southern Taluks it is often put off to a convenient day, before the completion of which, the girl is prohibited from entering into the kitchen or going to the temple for worship.

Sambandham.

585 The second or real marriage is the *Sambandham* (the customary union of man and woman), which is the principal word denoting the conjugal relations among the Nayars. It is said that there are seven forms of this marriage prevailing in Malabar, of which only [184] two or three are in vogue in the State. The customs connected with each of the latter differ in different places: [582] nevertheless the main features are the same all over. The best form of *Sambandham* among the Nayars is that between the daughter of a maternal uncle and his nephew; but, as a rule they enjoy very much greater freedom of choice than other [584] classes of people. The parents or friends of the bride or bride- [787] groom make the proposal, and the wishes of the *káranavans* of the two families are invariably consulted after the examination and agreement of their horoscopes. If the parties agree, an auspicious day is fixed in consultation with the astrologer. A few of the caste-men of the village and the friends of the bridegroom meet together in his house, and they all go in a sort of procession to the bride's house where they are properly welcomed and seated in a conspicuous part of the house. A portion of the *Rámáyanam* or other sacred book, referring to [533] marriage and the happy conjugal life attending it, is then read [533] by the Asán or village school master. Some music is also [574] provided for the entertainment of the assembled guests who

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like other conventionalities, is an accident, and the Nayar women are as chaste and faithful as their neighbours, just as [181] they are as modest as their neighbours, although their national [291] costume does not include some of the details required by conventional notions of modesty."[1] Nevertheless, the existing state of things in the community does not quite satisfy the sentiments of the educated public. There was a loud cry for reform and legislation in British Malabar. The 648 Madras Government appointed a commission, which, after its 582 protracted labours, enacted a permissive law, Act IV of 1896. 585 The main provisions of the Bill are, that, when a *sambandham* has been registered, it shall have the incidence of a legal marriage; that is to say, the wife and children shall be entitled [428] to maintenance by the husband or father respectively and to succeed to half his self-acquired property if he dies intestate, while the parties to such a *sambandham* cannot register a second one during its continuance. The law does not extend to this State. The fewness of the number of marriage registrations shows how little the Nayars, as a community, have availed themselves of it. The principal objections urged against 177 it are: (1) that it ignores caste and customary restrictions on 582 marriage and thereby interferes with caste; (2) that it sanc- 585 tions what according to social usage is deemed to be incestuous marriage; (3) that marriage before the Registrar is obnoxious to the people, and that no one has any scruples about going through the customary form; (4) that the provisions relating to divorce are ill-adapted to the present state of society in Malabar, and that revelations of conjugal infidelity in public courts are the most repulsive to the people; (5) that the provisions relating to the giving of the whole of [428] the self-acquired property to wives and children amount to violent interference with the customary law. The following extract from Moore's Malabar Law and Customs is well worth the perusal[2]:—

From the date on which the Act in Malabar came into force up to 31st March 1910, one hundred *sambandhams* have been registered. "In his last report of the working of the Act, the Registrar-General states, that the number of notices of

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[1] Logan's Manual of Malabar, Vol. I, page 136.

[2] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 15.

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582 585 intentions to register *sambandhams* was thirty-six in 1896—97, twenty-four in 1897—98 and only fourteen in 1898—99." He accounts for the falling off as follows:—

The mass of the people continues to regard the marriage law with aversion and suspicion, and even the educated members of the community who are in favour of the measure, shrink from taking advantage of it from fear of offending the elderly members of their *tarawids*, and all the powerful Nambuthiris and other great landlords. The Registrar of Calicut also points out, that the power conferred by the marriage law, to make provision for one's own wife and children, has hitherto acted as some inducement to persons to register their *sambandhams*, but as Act V of 1898 (Madras) which came into force from 2nd September 1898, enables the followers of the *marumakkathdyam* law to attain this object without registering their *sambandhams*, and "unnecessarily curtailing their liberty of action, and risking the chances of divorce proceedings," he thinks it unlikely that registration under the marriage law would increase in future.

Polyandry.

595 Among the Nayars of ancient times in Cochin, Malabar and Travancore, there was polyandry. In the report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, it is said, that there is evidence to show that it still lingers in Ponnani and Walluvanad Taluks, especially on the Cochin border of the former Taluk.[1] Apart from its existence in former times, it may be said that nowhere in these States is the custom still found to linger, no admitted instance of it has come to my notice in the course of my investigations into the customs and manners of the castes in the various parts of the State. An account of these customs as it existed in ancient times, and the theories that have been advanced in respect of it are of some ethnographical importance, and it may not be out of place here.

[593] [604] [582] [564] The Nayars of ancient times were, in most cases, neither regularly married, nor did they care much, when married, to support their wives and children; but their nephews (sons of sisters), who were their legitimate heirs, were properly looked after. Nayar women generally mated with Brahmans or Nayars, but never with people of lower caste under pain of

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[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 83.

death

595 [554] circumstances of his matrimonial life. If however he do so, his family and society will not recognise it as such, and no woman of any respectability will enter into such an alliance.

Duration of conjugal union.

586 According to the customary rules of ***sambandham***, the relationship between husband and wife, ceases at the will and pleasure of either party; but in practice, such dissolution of marriage is of rare occurrence. The woman generally does not leave her husband, while the man may send her away [613] whenever he chooses to do so. Marriage can be dissolved only with the consent of the ***káranavans*** or the other elders of the family. There are certain formalities to be observed in this connection, which vary in detail in different places, but some secret act indicating the intention of repudiation seems necessary before the divorce. In the event of the husband trying to effect a separation from his wife, he sends two or three respectable men to give intimation to the ***káranavan*** of the wife's family setting forth his reason for so doing. If the wife wishes to terminate the ***sambandham***, she brings it to the notice of the ***káranavan***, and with his consent tells the husband in the presence of her relatives the reasons for discarding [84] him. In the northern parts of the State, especially in the Chittur Taluk, the prevailing custom is to send for the husband and two of the fellow caste-men and to declare the reluctance of the woman to continue as wife, in the presence of these men. In some cases, instead of the formal declaration of the dissolution of marriage, certain conduct on the part of the parties is tantamount to such a declaration, such, for instance, as the failure by the husband or his family to send the usual presents to the family of the wife for ***Onam***, ***Vishu*** and ***Thiruvathira***, the refusal of the wife's people to accept them when sent, the failure to pay for wife's sustenance attended with deliberate omission to visit her, the deliberate absence for three consecutive nights with the consent of the elders from her husband's room. As a rule, no dissolution is allowed unless the cases for the same are enquired into and discussed by guardians and relations. Though a woman is free to marry and to dissolve the union, yet, as a rule, she [626] never does so. The fear of social disgrace and self interest [784] stand in the way of a woman's attempt to separate from her [582] husband. In Cochin as well as in South Malabar, the women

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are allowed greater freedom in the choice as well as in the 582
divorce of husbands (*sambandhakárans*), and the females in the
family do not interfere in their freedom so long as it does not 586
produce any domestic scandal. The orthodox view is that, as the
woman is not independent, she seldom thinks of relinquishing
the husband. Arbitrary divorce is thus discouraged, and adul- [684]
tery is a grave social offence. A wife, who is disputatious,
who steals her husband's property, who favours another than [689]
her husband, who converses with strangers, who is gluttonous, 586
who enters strange houses, should be put away even though
she may have born ten sons. Litigation between two families [578]
and disagreement between a husband and wife are also the causes. [684]
Social stigma follows the adulterer, and the adulteress loses her [626]
status in society.

Pulikudi.

A Nayar woman has to observe certain ceremonies during 843
her first pregnancy. First during and after
the seventh ,month of pregnancy, she bathes
and worships the deity in the temple every morning, and eats
before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter, over which
holy *mantrams* have been recited by the temple priest or by
Nambuthiris. This is done generally till delivery. *Pulikudi*
(tamarind juice drinking) is an indispensable ceremony per-
formed for every pregnant woman, by the rich and poor alike,
on an auspicious day, in the ninth month of pregnancy.
An auspicious day, nay, even the very hour, is fixed by the [787]
astrologer. The ceremony opens by the planting of a twig of
the *ambázha* tree (Spondias mangifera) on the morning of the [824]
day of the ceremony in the inner court-yard (*nadumittam*) or
the northern wing of the house. At the appointed hour
(*muhúrtam*), the pregnant woman, after having been bathed
and properly attired, is conducted to the northern block
of the house (*vatikkini*) where she is seated facing east-
wards. The *Ammáyi* or the uncle's wife, whose presence [604]
on the occasion is essential, goes to the court-yard, and
plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few
drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the
brother, or uncle, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is neces- [301]
sary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right hand
ring-finger. Holding a country knife (*pisánkatti*) in his [593]
left hand, with its point towards the north, he pours the [411]
tamarind juice over his knife with his right hand three times

except to cease to function, and to divide the *tarwad* property among individual 613 182
members. Theoretically the loss of the elements *A*, *B*, *C* and *D* marks the end
of the *tarwad* institution. Nevertheless, the *tarwad* is still conceptualized as a
distinctive social and ceremonial group by the element *E*, in spite of the loss
of all other elements.

In 1956 (March-June) when I studied the Nayar, most of the *tarwad* in [114]
Kerala had already ceased to exist as a functional body. In a large building
named *tarwad* where once lived more than fifty members of a matrilineal family, 613
I found only a few members: such as an old mother and her daughter with her
husband and children. The members of each *tarwad* were dispersed, forming 594
independent small households each with a spouse and children, having already 182
partitioned the *tarwad* property. Many of the older generation who are aged
fifty and the head (father) of the household consisting of an elementary family,
were born in a *tarwad*, and had experiences of the *tarwad* life. They are the people
who lived through the dramatic stage of the disintegration of the *tarwad*. Their
life history itself reflects the great changes in the Nayar matrilineal system.

It is extremely interesting to study through these living members the process, 613
by which the members of a *tarwad* organized on a strict matrilineal principle, 182
without allowing cohabitation of husband and wife, gradually reorganized into
many individual elementary families in the course of half a century. The
disintegration of the Nayar system as a whole took about two centuries but it
seems that the actual disintegration of an individual *tarwad* is about half a
century. The following discussion deals with how individual members acted at
various stages of the disintegration of the *tarwad*; and what the changes of the
matrilineal system actually mean to those individuals who are involved; and
what are the consequences of the disintegration of the *tarwad*.

Marayil Tarwad

The *tarwad* which I have chosen for study is named Marayil, and one of the 613
Nayar *tarwad* in Ernaklum, Cochin. This *tarwad* had many advantages for my 121
purposes. The majority of the members of the *tarwad*, who now form many
different households, still reside near each other, within the thirty minutes walk.
The number of the descendants of the foundress of the *tarwad* amounts to 94 [162]
altogether in May 1956, ranging through seven generations. Many *tarwad* were
much bigger in numbers, and deeper in generations, than this. Another ad- 613
vantage is that it represents a *tarwad* of a typical upper middle class among the 564
Nayar caste in this area: present occupations of these members are government
officials, advocates, teachers, etc. They have very friendly relationships with 121
many other Nayars in this area, and are thought of as respectable people. The [628]
husbands, at every generation, are all Nayars, without a single case of a marriage [582]
with a Nambudri Brahman, as is common among the upper class Nayar in this
area, nor with a Irawa, the caste below the Nayar.

Marayil *tarwad* was founded around 1830. The first partition by which the

[text continues on p. 21]

[Marayil Tarwad]

by which the
Marayil tarwad was founded around 1830. The first partition
tarwad split into two residential groups (Marayil and East Marayil), occurred in 613
1898, and the final partition of the property by individual members was in 1944. 182

In May 1956 the living members of the *tarwad* were grouped into ten different
households (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and J of the Diagram); the male 613
members who are not included in these groups formed each household with 594
wife and children. The relationships of these households show that the degree 182
of familiarity is paralleled with the genealogical distance as well as geographical
distance. According to my own observations, the following different stages of
the matrilineal group consciousness were noticeable. 182

First, the strong coherence of matrilineal members, appear in the groups 613
consisting of the members of A, B, and C, and that of D and E. The members 621
of each group meet almost every day; their daily life gives an impression as if 594
they were still carrying on the *tarwad* life. For example, when one household is [594]
visited by a guest, others are usually called to join the talking, and often enjoy
tea and meals together. In fact, the households of each group are direct neighbours of each other.

Secondly, the group whose members have the same grand-grandmother 613
(consisting of A-B-C and D-C together) is distinguished by the amount of contact
of its members with each other, against other members. They meet at least two 621
or three times a week. The third level of group consciousness appears in the 574
group consisting of all descendants of the foundress, including both Marayil and 182
East Marayil. If necessary, they visit each other; if they pass near a house of the group, they are ready to visit. The manner of speaking is a bit more formal than that of first and second groups. However this is distinguished as the ceremonial unit. Though they lost the function of the property group (Mudal Sambantham), they maintain strongly the function of the ceremonial group (Pula Sambantham); funerals, marriages and seasonal festivities are carried out by these members altogether. For this corporate unit, 32 (refer to the number of the Diagram) is acting as the head. This is indeed the last function which is left for the members of Marayil *tarwad*; it is the matrilineal lineage with the same history; all members clearly can trace their genealogical relations with each other.

Further than this range, there is no group consciousness, but these members 613
of Marayil *tarwad* observe exogamy from those members of Mullasseri, another 582
tarwad, from which Marayil had sprung. Though they cannot trace exact genealogical relationships, by the observation of exogamy, Mullasseri members are considered as matrilineal distant kin, sociologically different from other Nayars.

Disintegrating Process of Marayil Tarwad

Based on the information of the present members the Marayil was founded 613
by Prabaty Amma (*I*). The process of the foundation of this *tarwad* is as follows: 173

[Marayil Tarwad]

613 The increase in the establishment of paternal elementary families gradually
425 split the *tarwad* into pieces, lessening the function of the *tarwad*. This Marayil
175 *tarwad* finally divided its property between individual members in 1944, as did
182 many *tarwad* in this period. This was forty-seven years since the first partition in 1898, and this period saw the disintegration of this *tarwad*.

The members of the fourth and fifth generations in the Diagram make up
613 the transitional period: they had the *karanavan* as the head of the *tarwad* and at
175 the same time they played a role of the husband/father as in a patrilineal family.
182 Their duties and obligations were transitional from those of the *karanavan* to
[593] those of the father. Though by law then the *karanavan* was the legal guardian of the members of a *tarwad*, actually the father who lived with his children was
[429] already *de facto* guardian of his children. These individuals were pulled in their obligations and duties between their matrilineal kin and their wives and children. In fact they differentiated their roles according to the economic and residential circumstances in which they were involved, though the degree of differentiation differed from individual to individual.

613 When the fifth generation were in their youth, the *karanavan* of the *tarwad*
593 was *15*. According to the Nayar rule the duty of the fostering and educating these members should be performed by *15*. However, in actuality among these
175 members, those who had been given a higher education by the *karanavan* were
182 sons of *13* and *14* (*31*, *32*, *33*, *36* and *39*), while that of the sons of *12* (*25*, *27*, *28* and *30*) was given by their father. The latter's case is indeed the result of the father's economic ability and his affection towards his children whom he lived with. Yet this father, on the other hand, made also a considerable economic contribution to the members of his own *tarwad* as the *karanavan*. Thus such a man played the two roles of father and *karanavan* at the same time.

613 Such behaviour and contributions created ambivalent psychological
602 inclinations among his descendants through his wife as well as through his sisters. For example, the descendants of *12* who live now partly on property left by
421 *12*'s husband, tend to complain that their grandfather's sisters' daughters who
175 live in the house built by *12*'s husband, are enjoying property left by their
182 grandfather. They said that "they are enjoying our grandfather's property," a situation reasonable from the point of view of the working of the matrilineal system, since "our grandfather" is "their maternal uncle." Here we see an interesting fact that they think in terms of the father (grandfather): "the father (grandfather) is of ours." At the same time, they have a tendency to expect and depend on the economic help from *32* and *27*, who are their matrilineal kin. In fact *57* after the death of her father, was economically helped by *32* and (27), which she took for granted. Among these members at the transitional stage, a confusion of rights and obligations is obvious.

613 In such an unstable situation involving ambivalent elements, what gave
● 582 them a certain satisfaction or solution was cross-cousin marriage. The marriage of *53*, whose wife is his classificatory cross-cousin brought satisfaction to both
175 matrilineal groups (Marayil and Kallamparanbal), because by this marriage
182 both parties would have a chance to enjoy, and exercise rights on, the property

left by *12*'s husband for the kingroups of both his wife and his sisters, since both 613
inclined to demand rights on the property left by him to the other party. The 582
marriage of *56* also involved a similar situation for both members of Marayil 175
and Mangayil in order to enjoy the economic activity of *32*. 182

Traditionally the Nayar tended to marry among particular *tarwad* (not
necessarily two), between which friendly relationships, expressed in terms of
enanger, had been established. Hence many marriages fall into the category of
the cross-cousin marriage. However, the above cited cases were obviously meant
to solve the ambivalent economic situation arising from the disintegrating stage
of the *tarwad* system; and so it was explained to me. The present younger [829]
generation strongly avoid cross-cousin marriage, as they think it is not good
biologically. However, whether they dislike it or not, after the disintegration
of the *tarwad* system the cross-cousin marriage itself is losing its social and
economic function.

Matrilineal Elements in the Present Nayar Family

In spite of the final partition of the *tarwad* property, and the establishment 613
of elementary family households which made the *tarwad* functionless, the ideology 594
of the *tarwad* (matrilineal system) still persists in various aspects of the life of the 182
present Nayar.

In the new system, in theory, the husband established an independent house for himself and his wife, freed from both his *tarwad* and her *tarwad*, but it is interesting to observe that the house built by the husband is found near to his wife's *tarwad*, unless his job forced him to leave their birth place. The picture is that of a set of households whose wives are sisters, grouped in a certain area. For instance the husbands of *55* and *66* built their houses very near to that of the C group, which was built by the father of *29*: these three households are very close to each other, across narrow lanes and a garden. The behaviour of these members was described on page 21.

This might give an impression that women tend to attach to their matrilineal 613
members more than men do. However, men also have very close attachments 593
to their sisters, and are always ready to give moral and economic help to them, 574
in spite of living at a greater distance from them. It was the traditional custom
to marry a member of a *tarwad* situated in the same local area, since this was 182
certainly convenient for visiting marriage, and also owing to the inter *tarwad*
political relationships. Hence husbands and their sisters easily can visit each
other, even after residential separation. Such frequent visits among the members
of the matrilineal group maintain great familiarity among them. So far as my
own observation goes, a man who has considerable income helps his poorer
sisters almost in a same way as he does his wife and children. They themselves
say they have often trouble about which they should care for more, wife or sister.
They told me, that today they were well aware that they should do their best for
their wife and children with whom they live, but they also could not help loving
and caring for their sisters and sisters' children very much.

Respect towards a superior, towards a god, towards a respected Par-
ent, or towards the higher casteman, was always shown in Kerala by not 105
wearing anything in his presence above the waist, be one man or woman. 564
Basically, this has changed but little, the Nambudri Brahmin always 576
praying in his private temple with only a loin cloth on, the modern Tiya 291
factory girl now removing the blouse which she has taken to wearing
before some important personage of her kin group, so that her breasts
are exposed. What is a less frequent sight nowadays is Nayar, Tiya or
Kammalan women in the streets and on the roads without some cover-
ing over the upper parts of their bodies. Lower caste people, however,
Cherumas, Pulayas and aboriginals, being less affected by progress, are
still to be seen on the highways, their shapely bodies exposed from the
waist upwards.

A striking phenomenon in Kerala is the coexistence, even today, of 104
the two radically opposed systems of *marumakkathayam* (matriliny) and 105
of *makkathayam* (patriliny). In the first, children are born into their 564
mother's caste, while in the other they are born into their father's caste. 614
Inheritance is through the mother's brother in the first instance, and [611]
through the father in the second. The matrilineal people are grouped in [428]
matrilineal clans called *tarawads*, of which the senior male member,
the *karanavan*, is the recognized head; the patrilineal people have patri-
lineal clans called by the same name, *tarawad*, also with the senior male
as the *karanavan*, but at the same time, they observe descent through
the mother, and all are members of matrilineal descent groups known as
illams or *kiriyams*. While castes and, strictly speaking, subcastes are in [613]
principle endogamous, clans and lineages are definitely exogamous, mar- [588] ●
riage being matrilocal in the case of matrilineal people and patrilocal in [591]
the case of patrilineal people.[1]

Of the high castes, only the Nambudri Brahmins are *makkathayam*. [611]
They have patrilineal *gothras* or lineages which are exogamous, and [613]
patrilineal clans like *tarawads* which they, however, call *illams*. In olden [582]
days, only the eldest son could contract a regular marriage within his
caste, marriage being polygamous and patrilocal. The younger sons 105
were either expected to live as *brahmacharyas* (bachelor religious devo- 564
tees) or could cohabit with Nayar women in a form of union known as [588]
sambandham to which we shall revert in a moment. They were main- [463]
tained by their own efforts (they generally became cooks) and by a [582]
meagre allowance from the family *illam*. This has now been changed by [428]

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[1] I continue to make use of the terms *matrilocal* and *patrilocal* here, rather than *uxorilocal* and *virilocal* as still being perfectly adequate as they were for Ceylon previously.

105 the Nambudri Act of 1933, the provisions of which are that younger
564 Nambudris may marry women of their own caste and that the *illam*
● 582 property can be divided, if they so wish, and inherited by these younger
428 sons.

105 Others who observe *makkathayam* in Kerala are the south Malabar
564 and north Cochin Thandans, the Kammalans and their associated fellow
611 artisans and craftsmen, all the agrarian serfs and the aboriginals, the
south Malabar Moslem Moplas, the Christians and the Jews.

Marumakkathayam, on the other hand, is practised by Kshattriyas,
Samantans, Ambalavasis, Nayars, north Malabar Tiyas, south Travan-
core Iruvas and north Malabar as well as Laccadive Moplas. In the
case of the Mohammedans, a distinction should be made in matters of
[428] inheritance, family property (that is of the *tarawad*) being handed on
through the female line alone, while self-acquisitions of the father are
[792] passed on directly to his male heirs. A visit to the Makhdun Tangal of
[115] Ponani, the senior Islamic religious authority in Kerala, which I made
on the 24th of November, 1949, allowed me to confirm this. Originally
from the Hedjaz, Sayed Mohammed Ben Mustafa Haidaros told me that
this was an adaptation of Koranic law to the customs of the country and
had been introduced many years back with the coming of his ancestors
to the south-west coast of India.

Marriage in Kerala is an arranged affair, parents or a close relative
105 such as the maternal uncle, choosing a suitable partner for the child
564 after the age of puberty. Once the two families involved have agreed
[58] as to what shall be paid in bride price and in dowry, the wedding is
celebrated publicly with religious rites and with an appropriate display
of festive spending. This is the general rule insofar as marriage within
[588] the caste is concerned. Intercaste relations are, however, far from rare,
and their existence has been regularized and institutionalized in a form
of sexual union, mentioned above, and known as *sambandham*.

105 By this arrangement, which appears to conform to a general principle
564 of hypergamy in Kerala, men of a higher caste are permitted to consort
588 with women of a lower one, without incurring any of the obligations to-
wards wife and children which they would have if they had been regu-
larly wed. Greatly facilitating this is the fact that *sambandham* unions
[428] usually take place with women of those people who follow *marumakka-
thayam*, for in this way, the offspring which they may have will belong
to their caste and are cared for by and inherit from the maternal uncle.

Sambandham used to be the usual way in which younger Nambudri
sons enjoyed the privilege of taking Nayar women to themselves and

105 588 Without going into the elaborate details of the occasion – which are very different, depending on the caste to which the girl belongs – it is enough to mention that its main item is the tying of the *tali* round the child's neck by someone who is, usually, a substitute bridegroom or *manavalan*. He should be of a higher or at least of the same caste, but he can also be an old, venerable person who has already done this, for instance, to the mother; sometimes the father takes the place of the *manavalan*, at others, it is the maternal uncle. That the mother herself should do so, is not unknown, and cases in which a clay figure has taken the place of a live person are on record. It has also become increasingly the custom to tie the *tali* on many girls at the same time (to save expense), and the tendency is to do the ceremony earlier and earlier in the children's lives.

After the man who ties the *tali* has fulfilled his task, he is not entitled to touch the girl. But shades of the times when he perhaps did do so still exist in the practice of his attempting to force the girl's bedchamber door, and of his being pelted by male onlookers belonging to her kin group, which does take place in some of the lower castes. In south Malabar, he is supposed to lie down under the same blanket with the girl for a few moments; among the Ambalavasis, and in some of the sub-castes, he may even spend three nights with her, but under the strict supervision of a chaperon put there to see that he does not touch her. In some cases, a form of divorce ends the ceremony before the *manavalan* is allowed to go. *Tali* tying is universal in Kerala, where it is not [184] limited to the Hindus only, but is also practised by the Moslem Moplas and the Christians.

105 ● 582 588 833 [183] It is interesting to note that the Portuguese traveller of the beginning of the sixteenth century, Duarte Barbosa, mentions that before a Nayar girl can be married, afer the *tali* has been tied on her, she should be deflowered before puberty, by some young man called in specially to do this from outside the caste, "for amongst themselves they hold it an unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women" (*The Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, p. 124).

4. LAND-TENURE

105 241 Kerala is an agricultural state and everyone in it is either dependant on the produce of the land or linked to it by serving those who till the soil. The main crops are rice, coconuts, pepper and arecanuts, in that order of importance. Others, less important, are pulses, tapioca, spices such

555 who do still live matrimonially in this way. From a certain Musad (low-caste Nambudri Brahmin practising surgery) whom I met in Shoranur [115] and who was introduced to me as someone well informed because, ow- [1759] ing to his profession, he had access where others could not go, I heard that in the very closed Court circles of Cochin and Travancore polyandry of the old type is still practised by Nayar ladies, who consort with wealthy Tamil Brahmins and Pillais from the east coast. It would naturally have been far beyond the bounds of possibility for me personally to investigate the truthfulness of this allegation, and therefore it can only be given here for what it is worth.

Thandans and Tiyas (Thiyyas) of north Cochin practise polyandry of the fraternal type, and none other. They are *makkathayam*, and a regular wedding ceremony is usual in their case. Cross-cousin marriage, in [582] which a woman marries her father's sister's son, her *machchunan* and all his brothers, is preferred if not compulsory. The ceremony is per- 585 formed at the bride's house, after the preliminary exchange of bride- 595 price and dowry have taken place between the two families involved, and consists of the girl and her bridegrooms being seated in a row and fed ritually on *kanji* (rice porridge) and coconut milk. The honeymoon of the newly wed also takes place at the home of the wife, her husbands going to her either each in turn or in a body. Later residence of the [591] family is patrilocal.

173 Most Thandans and Tiyas of central Kerala used to be toddy tappers, as I have mentioned earlier (p. 172). This occupation, they say, they [463] brought from Ceylon, from where they are reputed to have originated; [595] they also profess to have brought from there the coconut palm tree and the practice of fraternal polyandry. The tradition is closely linked to that of the Kammalans whom I shall describe next, and there does seem to be some evidence of close ties with the great island to the south. To [169] this day, many Thandans and Tiyas emigrate temporarily to Ceylon as labourers, and it is said, although the etymology may be fanciful as some authors insist, that Tiya is derived from *dvipa*, "island" in Sanskrit.

595 I found Thandan and Tiya polyandry quite active still in Walluvanad 198 and in north Cochin. I had been led to believe that it was fast dying out and that only very few practised it any longer. But this was not my impression, especially in the taluk of south Malabar. In north Cochin, [656] a recent enactment known as Act XVII of 1115 The Cochin Makkathayam Thiyya Act of 1940, had made polyandry illegal in future, and it is true that nine years after the coming into existence of the new legislation, only the older people still practised the ancient form of marriage.

Tiyas

well as the unmarried women and girls lived in the house. The women 595*
who had married out had left and were living with the families of their 591
husbands. What struck me was the considerable number of unmarried [589]
boys and girls relatively advanced in age who were still at home. Tiyas, I [582]
was told, marry late, usually after puberty, which is exceptional in India.

It will be noticed that polyandry was only practised in the elder generations. 595*
Not a single case occurs among the younger people. The
reason for this is that the Thiyya Makkathayam Act of 1940 made polyandry [656]
illegal in Cochin, and nobody was thus at liberty to marry in this
way any longer. Property, which was undivided so far, would be divided, [428]
Velu told us, when he and his brothers and his wife had died.
This was in accordance with the new legislation, and all the children, girls included, would have a share. The boys, however, would be allotted double portions. Thus for their children by the two marriages, if the girls were not married by then, there would be thirteen shares, of which the boys would get the four first.

Velu assured me that formerly they were polyandrous in his caste so 595*
that the property should not be divided up. It kept the brothers together, 178
they did not get involved in the quarrels of their wives, it was not necessary to split up into separate families, and thus was a very good system. Times, however, had changed, he said and now because there was a law forbidding polyandry, there was no longer any reason to keep what they owned undivided. He seemed to think that the old way of doing things had its advantages, especially in the possibility of bringing in another woman, if this were desirable and the brothers agreed to it (as he and his younger brothers had done), without being obliged to separate and start splinter households as had now become necessary. When I questioned him as to how they would keep going now that the economy of an undivided polyandrous household was no longer possible, he replied that it would oblige them to turn coolies, cut laterite, plough for others, carry on petty trade and emigrate to the towns.

On the 2nd of November 1949, I went again to Cochin accompanied 595*
by an interpreter. We drove into the Tallapilli taluk of the northern part [103]
of that state, and visited a village near Kunnamkulam, called Perumpillav
(big jack fruit tree). The people living here called themselves [101]
"Ezhuvas", but, in accordance with recent Cochin legislation, they were [564]
assimilated to Tiyas or Thiyyas as the local spelling has it. (Article 5, paragraph i of the Thiyya *Makkathayam* Act of 1940 states that "Thiyya included *Ezhuva*, Chova, Billava, Marayan, Thandan and others recognized as such.")

tarawad name was Neripatta, and the property now belonged to the old 595* woman and her sons. They were *verumpattam* cultivators for a Nayar 601 *kanamdar*, the Shoranur *desammangalam* (village headman) whom I [427] had met. They paid a rent of five rupees.

I heard that of the old generation, the four brothers, Paini, Krishna, Raman, Aiyappan and Narayan, were dead – although there was some doubt about Narayan, the last one. As he had emigrated to Singapore [167] and had never come back, they presumed that he had died there. They had all been wed polyandrously to Kali when she was seventeen, and she was now left with her four sons, who had begun by being polyandrous, but who had eventually taken wives of their own, the common wife, Paru, having stayed with the eldest, Velandi. The property had, however, not been split up, and they lived in the mansion-sized house, which was happily large enough to contain them all. Presumably it was also sufficiently big to keep the women from quarrelling and dragging the men into their squabbles – something which people who live in polyandry seem particularly to fear. Of the third generation, the two grandsons, Velu and Krishna, had also lived polyandrously, having taken one Kalyany as a common wife. Like their two sisters they had, however, died, aged thirty and twenty respectively, leaving a couple of boys with their widow to look after. There had thus been three generations of polyandrous marriages in this family.

Another point of interest was the fact that two of Kali's sons, Para- 595* gnoden and Krishna had broken away, the former after having first been 582● married with his elder brothers to Paru. They had married their fathers' 601 sisters' daughters, Vali in the first case, and Janeki in the second. When I enquired why this was so, I found it difficult to get a precise answer. I was told that was because this was a "right" marriage, and that if possible, marriage with a *machchunan* is "best". But I evoked only silence and some quizzical looks when I asked why then Paragnoden was first married polyandrously to Paru. It seemed to me – although this is only my personal impression and I was not told so – that the polyandrous marriage was gone through with because it was customary in those days, when the elder brother got married, for the younger ones to join in. Later, when Paragnoden, for reasons which he did not impart to me, felt like putting up a household of his own, he naturally turned to his cross-cousin, on his fathers' side. He was eighteen when he married Paru, with his brothers, and twenty two when he left her and took Vali to wife. This would not account, however, for Krishna, the youngest, not having also been married to Paru. It may be, of course that he was

*595 so, but that they would not tell me. He was twenty five when he took
60 his fathers' sisters' daughter, Janeki, to be his wife.

582 I found Kali difficult to interview. She was old, very old by Indian
*595 and Kerala standards, and quite plainly showed her displeasure at being
601 bothered. Consequently I went over to asking Paragnoden for the in-
115 formation that I wanted, but he seemed extraordinarily ignorant and lazy. Finally, it was from a neighbour who was called in, that most of what I learned was gathered. It is from what these combined informants told me, and from what my guide and interpreter knew about the family, that I was able to piece the genealogy together. It will be found in Tables 9 and 10 herewith. I have been obliged to put it on two tables because of the size of the first generation.

*595 On Table 9, Vali and Lakshmi are shown. Now deceased, they were
601 sisters of the five brothers. They live to be fifty and fifty three respectively. Personal names and *tarawad* names were not always known by the informants, and in these cases, I have been obliged to put in interrogation marks – except where a *tarawad* is qualified as being one from the village of Palappuram, for this at least gives a geographical location.
582 It is to be noted in Table 9 how advanced in age* are some of the un-
732 married young people, but then Thandans do marry late in Kerala, differing in this from other parts of India. The congenital idiot, Narayan, son of Paragnoden, was at his father's side during the interview.

*595 This completed my general study of Thandan and Tiya (Thiyya) polyandry. However, before this date occurred, I had already started visiting Kammalan houses to find out what the polyandry of this caste of artisans was like.

On the 12th of November, 1949, I went to Lakkidi in the Walluvanad taluk, near the borders of Palghat taluk, to interview the Tiyas I had seen there ten years before. I was accompanied by two interpreters and a guide. We were not successful in finding the Tiya family we sought, as it had moved elsewhere in the intervening years, but we found a blacksmith living on the same bit of property, as I have already reported
*595 earlier (see p. 178). Before I give an account of this family's polyandry,
564 however, I would like to describe that of a household of goldsmiths,
[326] living close by, as, hierarchally, these craftsmen come before their fellow blacksmiths in the Kammalan caste.

In the language of Kerala, Malayalam, they are called *Tatham* (see p. 173) and they are among those who are said to have gone to Ceylon
[361] in the days of the Perumals. They are not a wealthy group of people,
and this became apparent at once when we entered their compound near

*[i.e. 22, 20, 12 & 10 yrs. old --Analyst]

[text continues on p. 194]

Kammalans

union with Kurumba. They were not the only ones following the custom 595 in the family, as their sister, Paru, now dead, had also had two 601 husbands, the brothers Aiyappan and Narayan of the Vetukatukundu *tarawad*. She had died in childbirth, when her little boy was born; the child died too. Nilu, their youngest sister, had also died giving birth to a boy, her first-born, who did not survive either. Of what Narayani, the next youngest sister, had died, was not clear, but it had been after she had given birth to a little girl who was still alive. Of their children, the eldest, a boy called Kunju, and his sister, the eldest but one and [582] bearing the name of Kunji, had married a brother and sister of a neighbouring *tarawad* called Putanparekil; there had been no marriage between cross-cousins. They did, however, say that this was the best form of union, as the Thandans had said. The genealogy of the family is given in Table 11.

I have described how, previously, we went into the other compound, 595* where the Tiyas of 1939 used to live, to question the family of black- 564 smiths about their polyandry. This sub-caste of the Kammalans is called 584 *Karuwan* or *Perinkollan* and they, too, are not a wealthy class. 326 These lived only a few years from the Thatan household just described, and their dwelling was very similar to the other. The yard of the thatched [351] house had blacksmith's instruments lying about it, which showed at once who lived there.

We met and interviewed a man called Ittenam, aged fifty five, whose 595* brother, Poreyn, with whom he used to share a common wife, Paru, 601 was now dead. He was a widower, and lived with his sons, Raman and Kunyuni, twenty two and twenty years old, who were present at our talk. Their common wife, Nani, twenty, was also there, a little baby boy on her hip, and the two other women with her were her sister-in-law, Narayani, twenty four, who was the wife of both her brothers and also the sister of her two husbands, and Kunji, the thirty six year old elder sister of Narayani, Raman and Kunyuni. A picture of her is given in Fig. 12; she was here on a visit, as her household was elsewhere. All [853] the women, except Kunji, were bare-breasted, and, when they were not suckling the babies on their hips, milk ran down onto their abdomens from their naked breasts. Itteenam's elder sister, Unuli, was alive, aged sixty one, but she was married and had her home elsewhere with her husband, Narayan.

When I made the genealogy of this household, I found that its name was Mudrikkelparampil. The *tarawad* was similarly named and was ex- [614] ogamous together with the *kiriyam*, as was to be expected. *Makka-*

[Text continues on p. 197]

thayam was followed and caste, or rather sub-caste, endogamy. There 595*
was more polyandry in the second generation of this family than in any 601
other encountered so far. I found that Kunji was married to two husbands; [614]
Lakshmi, aged thirty three, to four husbands; Paru, thirty, to
two husbands; Sita, twenty eight, to three husbands; and Narayani, already
mentioned, to two husbands. All the respective husbands were
brothers, and only fraternal polyandry was practised. The women had
all married early: Kunji and Yakshmi at sixteen, Paru at fifteen, Sita a [582] ●
bit later at twenty four, and Narayani, the youngest, at eighteen. The
reason for which Sita had married later was that she had been taken by
the three younger husbands of her elder sister Lakshmi, after seventeen
years of marriage with the latter. Only Kanju, the eldest, had remained
with Lakshmi, and Raman, Narayan and Krishna had decided to marry
Sita jointly, when they found that she was not getting married and
showed no inclination to do so outside. The two younger brothers of
the Mudrikkelparampil household, Raman and Kunyuni, were eighteen [582]
and sixteen when they took Nani to wife; she was now twenty. Polyandry
certainly did not look as if it were dying out in the blacksmith's
caste, judging, at least, from this striking example.

The property upon which the family lived was worth four thousand 595*
rupees. It consisted of the house, some agricultural implements and a 435
paddy field. The people were tenants of the Nambudri Brahmin *janmi* 427
Kodierthamana, and paid him the rent of a customary *verumpattam*
nine rupees yearly, plus a renewal fee of thrice the rent every twelve
years. Poreyn and Kunyuni were practising smiths, hence the implements 595*
we had seen on coming in, and Raman worked at the Metal Industries
Ltd. in Shoranur, where we camped. They also cultivated the [336]
paddy field to produce some of the rice they needed themselves, althought [243]
the yield was not very great. The genealogy is given in Table 12. [433]

On the 15th of November, 1949, together with interpreter and guide, 595*
I visited a family belonging to the third sub-caste of the Kammalans, 564
that of the carpenters or *Asari* (often pronounced *Ashari*). I heard [335]
that laterite-cutters called *Puri-asari* or "mud carpenters" were assimilated [333]
to these people, but that they only constituted a division of the sub-caste.
They are also reputed to be polyandrous; I did no have an opportunity,
however, to verify this myself.

The *Asari* whom I saw that day, lived at Palappuram, a village on the 595*
main Shoranur-Palghat road, some few miles east of Ottappalam. The 342
compound of the house was by the side of the road on the right, just [361]
beyond the village, coming from the west. It was a very poor looking

[Text continues on p 199]

construction made of woven palm leaves and thatched, and we interviewed 595*
two men: Raman, aged fifty seven, and his eldest son, Kutikrishnan, [342]
who was thirty five. The name of the household and *tarawad* was [614]
Perinkulam.

Kutikrishnan told us that he had two fathers, Raman, who was with 595*
us that day, and Shangu, a younger one, aged fifty five, who was absent. 601
All his fathers' sisters, and there had been three of them, had died in
infancy. His mother was called Lakshmi and was fifty; I was unable to
ascertain the name of the *tarawad* from which she came. Kutikrishnan's
wife bore the same name as his mother and he had had three boys and
a girl by her. Only the daughter was alive, as the sons had all died of [165]
what he described as "convulsions".

I asked why, if the fathers had been polyandrous, the second generation 595*
was not so too. Informant 1 attributed it to times having changed 178
and "civilization spreading". By this he meant that people did not wear [302]
their hair tied in the typical Kerala top-knot on one side of the forehead
any longer and had also taken to growing moustaches; he said, too, that
it was the women now who objected to having more than one husband.
In some marriage agreements, it was specified, he said, that the daughter [675]
of the house would only be given to one man. It was particularly in
wealthy families that this was taking place, because they could afford it.
Raman, informant 2, when consulted as to what he thought of these new
ways, said that they were bad, but what could be done about them? In
olden days, it was always said that polyandry was good because: "Where
four breasts cannot agree, two heads can", meaning that the women
cannot live in peace together while the men can. Nowadays, the young
people did not seem to understand this, and the result was that property
was split up between sons and life made harder for them.

When I came to make out the genealogy of the family, I found that in 595*
spite of all this talk about new-fangled ways, Amini, Kutikrishnan's 601
sister was married polyandrously to three brothers of a *tarawad* called
Warode. It was significant, however, that both informants disclaimed
any knowledge of the names of the brothers of the elder husband, Narayan.
Later, I heard that although Madhavan, a younger brother of informant
1, aged eighteeen, had not been publicly married to his sister-in-law,
Lakshmi, he was known to share her with his brother in the old,
traditional polyandrous way. The genealogy is given in Table 13.

The carpenter sub-caste of the Kammalans, Raman told us, have exogamous 564
tarawads and *kiriyams*. They too, while observing the rule 614
strictly for the *makkathayam tarawad*, are not so careful about it in the 582

[Text continues on p. 201]

kiriyam; in that matrilineal descent group they limit themselves to not 564
marrying those of their acquaintances whom they know belong to it. 614
The sub-caste is also endogamous, carpenter only marrying "carpentress", [582]
and never a *Puri-asari*. Normally,[1] boys alone can inherit the [428]
property, but if there are no male heirs, the girls, even if they are married, will inherit equal shares.

The members of the Perinkulam household were subtenants of a 427
Nayar tenant called Mutad Achutah Nayar, himself the *verumpattamdar* of a Nayar *janmi* from Kavalappaia near Shoranur called Kavalappaia Mupil Nayar. As *kudiyiruppu* tenants of the site where the house was built, they paid a yearly rent of only one rupee.

On the 17th of November, 1949, I visited the house of a member of 595*
the fourth and last sub-caste of the Kammalans, the *Musari* (often pronounced [564]
Mushari), bell-metal (an alloy of lead and brass) smiths or [326]
braziers. It was near Lakkidi in the Walluvanad taluk, one furlong north of the main road, and to reach it, my interpreters and I followed a very attractive path, sunk deep between high banks of earth and overshadowed with coconut and arecanut palm trees.

We arrived at a miserable house, standing in a grove of palms and [351]
plantains, a red laterite courtyard in front, in which could be seen some stone moulds in grooves – no doubt the foundry. There was nobody about, but when we called out, a little girl (whom we later heard was called Menakhi) appeared and said that she would go and fetch her father. He arrived soon afterwards, a big, strong man, fifty years old,
called Krishnan. He wore his hair over his forehead in the typical [302]
Malayalam top knot, and he had a very ugly face.

The name of the household, he told us, was Puawutterparamba and 595*
it belonged to the Chelamanaparamba *tarawad*. Our informant was the 601
youngest brother of three, and there was a sister called Kali, aged forty nine, about whom, however, he could tell us nothing at all. The whole family used to live, it seemed, at a place called Nedungothani, near Palappuram. That was their village, he said. But then, the elder brother, Konnan, now sixty five years old, had got married some thirty years ago to a woman named Sita whom he had met while "roaming about". He had married late as a result of this proclivity for wandering away from home, and, with his bride, aged fifty today (Krishnan could not tell us the name of her *tarawad*), he had moved to Wallancheri, near Kutipuram, Pattambi, because he had found business bad in Nedungothani. He was still living in Wallancheri and had five children, of whom four were married, the two daughters away to men of other vil-

[1] [i.e. in the carpenter sub-caste of the Kammalans -- Analyst]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Kammalans

*595 lages. Here again, the informant was unable to give us *tarawad* names, 601 and indeed this was most characteristic of the whole interview. He gave 614 village names instead, saying that they used these now in his caste.

[564] After Konnan had left, their father and their mother's brother got Kunyikai, his elder brother aged sixty two today, and himself married to Kunyu, a young girl fifteen years old at the time, from the Kerikell *tarawad* in Cochin state, resident very close to Lakkidi on the other side of the Ponani river, only about a mile away. That was twenty five years ago, and Kunyu was now forty years old. Very soon, Kunyikai found it impossible to live in this polyandrous atmosphere (Krishnan [584] would give no details), and asked their maternal uncle to get him another wife. Their father had died in the meantime, and their mother's brother was thus the only person who could do this for him. He found Chiru for Kunyikai, and they were wed two years after the former marriage.

All the members of the family never lived together, however, because as soon as the wedding had taken place, Krishnan and the former common wife, took their part of the property (which was not much) and moved to this place near Lakkidi, where they established themselves. They chose it because it was so close to the wife's relatives. All the children they now had were Krishnan's, as Kunyu did not have any for five years after the polyandrous marriage. Krishnan, the eldest boy, now twenty, was born three years after the shift of residence. Kunyikai stayed behind in the family home, and was still there at the time of the interview. He had one boy called Kunju, aged twelve. Of the children of Krishnan and Kunyu, only the second, a daughter called Kalyany, and aged eighteen, was married. She became the wife of two brothers, Raman and Chami, of Ambalapara village, at the age of fifteen. She had one child, a boy called Paru, one year old. The genealogy which I established from this information is given in Table 14.

614 I was very surprised to find the informant so ignorant of the *tarawad* 564 names – although he did know that of his own *tarawad*. He assured me that village names had now taken their place and that, in his caste, they [582] observed what might be called "village exogamy". Did this mean that the bellmetal smith's patrilineal clans coincided with topographical units such as villages? There was, it seemed to me, a possibility of this being so, although I could get no confirmation of the hypothesis from anybody, not even from my interpreters and guides. The *Musari* observed [582] exogamy also in their *kiriyams*, Krishnan said, although, as in the case of other castes which I have previously described, they only did so for 428 those of the group whom they knew. Inheritance was *makkathayam*, 564

[TEXT Continues on P. 204]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Manans
Panans

first moved to Mangode village, where Kali came from, for eleven years. 595*
Today they were living at Managhat, where Erechen had found it easier 601
to get work.

As Kunji, my aged informant, was getting tired, we now took on Krishnan, son of the late Krishnan by his second wife, Kunji (the repetition of the same names in a family in Kerala is very confusing). He [115] [551] helped us to check all this material and to correct some inaccuracies which had crept in. I noticed that in some cases it was impossible to 614 obtain the name of the *tarawad*, and that the name of the village would 564 be given instead. There were, however, no *kalarikels* with the Manans, I was told. The patrilineal clans were exogamous, as were also the [582] ● matrilineal *kiriyams* of these people, although they were not very well known and practically neglected in present-day marriages. Inheritance [428] was *makkathayam*, as expected, but I could get no confirmation of the reported four endogamous subdivisions described in the *Gazeteer of the Malabar and Anjengo Districts*, p. 130 (see Bibliography).

This Manan family was living on ground belonging to a Nambudri 564 Brahmin *janmi* called Mangala Mana C.M.C. Narayana Nambudripad, 410 but they did not pay him any rent. They were there more as his em- 465 ployees and, in exchange for dwelling space, rendered him the invaluable services which he needed from them as washermen and barbers.

In the afternoon of the same day of the 25th of November, 1949, 564 upon which I had visited a Thandan household (see above, p. 189), I 79 went to Palappuram to see the family of a *Panan* (exorcist and leaf [243] umbrella maker).

They lived in a poor but neat and cleanly house, situated in a rather 595* thickly overgrown grove of the usual Kerala vegetation. On the veran- [342] dah of the modest building of dried cow-dung and mud, a bare breasted woman, Sita, aged forty five, and three boys awaited us. She received us nicely and spoke quite readily. She seemed resigned to her poverty and conditions and only complained to us that she was not able to give the boys more and proper food.

She told us that she lived with the surviving husband of a once poly- 595B androus union, in which she had been married when she was eighteen 60 to two brothers, Panju, who had died two years after the wedding, at twenty one, and Korappan, her present forty four year old husband. She had had a daughter, Kunji, within the first year of her marriage, and four boys afterwards with Korappan. All the children, including the twenty six year old eldest girl, were unmarried; she was still breast-feeding the youngest, two and a half year old Kumaran. This, as I 853

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Pulluvans

*595 [361] We found the house, which was a small one, in a grove of plantains, surrounded by tapioca fields. A man named Komon, aged twenty nine, met us and took us onto the neat verandah of the building which was constructed in the usual Kerala style. He told us that the name of his household was Putanpunakkil, meaning "new house", and I made out the genealogy of his family, as shown here in Table 20.

*595 601 His elder brother, Raman, aged thirty three, had died recently, he said. He had had two younger sisters too, Chimdevi and Narayani, both of whom were also dead, the eldest at fifteen and the youngest at twelve. He and his elder brother had been married first polyandrously to a woman called Kalyany, for four years. Their father had found her for them, from the village of Churumudacheri. They had had a daughter by her, Ittiyadi, who was now eleven.

Kalyany, it seemed, had never really settled down in polyandry, and had always said that she did not like having two husbands. She wanted to stay alone with the eldest, Raman, but the latter did not accept. As he persisted in this attitude, in spite of her insistence that she have him all to herself, she eventually ran away, back to her parents' home, leaving the daughter with the brothers. That was seven years ago, and their father had immediately provided them with another wife, Kunji, from Manar village. She was twenty at the time, and had been married earlier, at the age of fourteen, to two brothers, Velu and Aiyappan of Tirumatankodu village. She did not get on with these two men and wanted to leave them. When Komon's father chose her for him and his brother, she left her married home, and the men, quite exceptionally, allowed her to take away the boy they had had with her, called Paramesuram and who was now aged ten. Kunji herself was now twenty seven years old and she had had three children with her new husbands, two boys and a girl. I could see that she was expecting another child shortly (in two months time, they told me).

There appeared to be no *tarawads* with these people, and village 564 614 names were used instead for the patrilineal clans, which were exoga- 428 mous. There were *kiriyams*, also exogamous, and inheritance was *makkathayam*. The sub-caste was reputed to allow marriage of brothers and 564 sisters; the Gazeteer mentions this on p. 133. When I asked Komon ●582 about it, he protested that it was calumny and that they had never done 588 such a thing. In my opinion, the reputation wrongly based on insuf- 114 ficient evidence, comes from the fact that these people form a very small group and those persons who are of the same generation use classificatory kinship terms which are apt to make it appear that "sister" mar-

[Text continues on p. 216]

564 582 ries "brother" but which really refer to someone of another village and
588 *kiriyam.*[1]
114 The Putanpumakkil house stood on ground belonging to a Nayar
427 *janmi*, cousin of the former Secretary of the States Ministry in New
Delhi, Sri V. P. Menon, called Wuppala Shankara Narayana Menon.
They paid a *kudiyiruppu* rent of one *fanan* (annas four and pies six)
yearly. They made their miserable living from plying their traditional
534 trade. To give me a sample of their musical abilities, they offered me
a concert on the instruments which they used; those included the famous
Pulluva-kudam, a sort of stringed instrument cum drum; but I am afraid
that the effect was not pleasing to my ears.

162 While carrying out these investigations among polyandrous house-
564 holds in the Walluvanad taluk, I endeavoured to obtain statistics con-
cerning the proportions of the sexes of the two principal polyandrous
castes studied, the Thandans and the Kammalans, but they were unob-
[115 tainable. The Tahsildar of the Walluvanad taluk, on instruction from
the Collector of Malabar, however, sent me the following letter:

"Tuluk Office, Walluvanad
Perintalmanna, Dt. 9-12-49

Sir,
Statistics of certain populations
Called for – Furnished.
Collector's Ref. W-4-1450/49 dated 4-12-49

As ordered by the Collector's reference cited, the statistics of Izhuvas and Kammalans are not available in the Census records available in this office. The figures now furnished are approximate and are based on local enquiries made by me and my subordinates.

	Male	Female
Thandans (Izuvans)	5100	6100
Kammalans (Karuvans, Thattan, Musari & Assari)	2600	3100

signed
? Menon
Tahsildar
9.12.49"

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[1] Iyer, in *The Cochin Tribes and Castes* (Vol. I, p. 148, 1909 ed., see Bibliography), says that, with the Pulluvans "nor can a woman allow herself to conjugal servitude to more than one". In view of the above evidence, this pronouncement does not appear to be correct.

575 of marriage in North Malabar. It will be seen from the
184 description given above that the pudamuri is necessarily a costly ceremony, and many people resort to the less costly ceremony of uzhamporukkuka or vīdāram kayaral. The features of this ceremony are to a certain extent the same as pudamuri, but it is celebrated on a smaller scale. [574] There is no cloth-giving ceremony. The feasting is confined to the relations of the couple. The particular incident of this form of marriage is that the husband should visit the wife in her house, and is not permitted to take her to his house, unless and until he celebrates the regular pudamuri ceremony. This rule is strictly adhered to in North Malabar, and instances in which the husband and wife joined by the uzhamporukkuka ceremony, and with grown-up children as the issue of such marriage, undergo the pudamuri ceremony some fifteen or twenty years after uzhamporukkuka, in order to enable the husband to take the wife to his house, are known to me personally. The sambandham of South Malabar, and the kidakkora kalyānam of Palghat have all or most of the incidents of pudamuri, except the presenting of cloths. Here money is substituted for cloths, and the other ceremonies are more or less the same. There is also salkāram ceremony wanting in South Malabar, as the wives are not at once taken to the husband's house after marriage."

585 In connection with the following note by Mr. C. P. Rāman Menon on sambandham among the Akattu Charna or Akathithaparisha (inside clan), Mr. Fawcett
[582] states that "my informant says in the first place that the man should not enter into sambandham with a woman
[178] until he is thirty. Now-a-days, when change is running
[181] wild, the man is often much less. In North Malabar,
[582] which is much more conservative than the south, it was,

however, my experience that sambandham was rare 585 [181]
on the side of the man before twenty-seven." "The [582]
Karanavan," Mr. Rāman Menon writes, "and the women
of his household choose the bride, and communicate their [584]
choice to the intending bridegroom through a third
party; they may not, dare not speak personally to him
in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are [787]
informally consulted, and, if they agree, the astrologer is
sent for, and examines the horoscopes of both parties
to the intended union. As a matter of course these are
found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the
sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes
place, two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit
the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming.
There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats,
and, when on the point of leaving, they inform the
senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes
to have sambandham with . . . . (naming her), and
such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony.
The proposal is accepted with pleasure, and the party
from the bridegroom's house returns home. Preparations for feasting are made in the house of the bride, as
well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day.
To the former all relations are invited for the evening, 585
and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same 574
age as the bridegroom are invited to partake of food at
7 or 8 P.M., and accompany him to the bride's house.
After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel [431]
leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the [613]
taravad), areca nuts and tobacco, to be given to the bride's
household, and which are distributed to the guests.
When the bride's house is far away, the bridegroom
makes his procession thither from a neighbouring house.
Arrived at the bride's house, they sit awhile, and are again [276]

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AW1 India

Kerala AWII

Savings are not invested in industrial undertakings, there being 454 no openings for the same.

On the question of rural indebtedness, its causes and extent, 426 much can be written. There has been, I am told, an enormous increase in indebtedness among all classes. Nearly 75 per cent are in debt, especially so the poor agriculturists. The great proportion of small landholders and agricultural workers, the want of diversity of industry and occupation, the rise in the price of commodities, the high usurious interest which a few take for money advanced, the substitution of money for kind in taxes, the high cost of education, lower and higher, to which Brahmans resort now-a-days, the high value which people set on Government service, however small the pay, all these are working, some generally and others in particular cases, to cause and perpetuate rural indebtedness. Co-operative credit societies could do much to help the people out of it. I may also mention that litigation is also [691] responsible. For every paltry difference resort is had to the Munsif's or the Magistrate's Court, as there are no other means of settling such differences. There are nearly twenty-five vakils or pleaders in the Munsif's Court alone who cast nets to earn something by favouring the litigious spirit. Among the Brahmans [582] the 'dowry system' is working some mischief. Every girl has to be given in marriage before her twelfth year and the bridegroom demands a good round sum. Social reformers condemn the system. A redeeming feature of it, viz., that that sum is a substan- [871] tial help to the bridegroom's costly higher English education is not wholly to be forgotten; and no Brahman stops his education until thrown out by the University or money ceases to be forthcoming.

The proportion of debtors who have liberated themselves from debt may be estimated at nearly a fourth.

Communal village life is unknown in the 'village.' The 621 Brahmans in the 'town' try to revive a 'Samooham' (gathering) but with no success so far. There is no communal property. Separate individual life is the order. The local Muhammadans and Christians keep up a kind of unity within their 'castes' because of their religion and Church. The Hindu temples in the village are managed by the State Government. For every slight improvement 653 in the village the people have to approach the Government. For example, the local tank has been in ruins for the last three or four years; the Government of course helps the people, but the tank is not yet repaired because of official delay and when it is actually done, as was done once a few years back, the contractor earns a good round sum as profit and the work is not properly carried out.

Temples and festivals.—The annual religious festival in the local 796 temple at Watakanchery town which lasts for five days is conducted by the Government. Rs. 128 and 128 paras of paddy (24 cwt.) are spent; a contractor bids for the sum and he conducts the festival.

The people of the village themselves conduct an annual religious festival at a temple nearly three miles to the north by collecting subscriptions. They spend nearly Rs. 300 on the occasion. It is pleasant to witness a procession in Malabar. So many elephants are ornamented and made to stand in array. The number of elephants depends upon the depth of the purse. Drum-beaters

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AW1 India

Kerala AWII

759 there will be a specialist for diseases of children, an eye specialist, an ordinary vaidyan who cures all common diseases, and a *mantravati* (hymn-chanter) who pretends to cure diseases by chanting certain hymns within himself, and who is believed in by the masses. There is also a *visha-vaidyan*, or expert in curing snake-bite, in some villages.

The Sub-Assistant Surgeons in charge of Government hospitals are, I am afraid, affected by red tape and carelessness born of security of employment and income.

In rural parts especially I am pained to note that their treatment is getting discredited, for the apothecaries take little pains to know the exact nature of the diseases of the poor persons who resort to the hospital and to prescribe proper medicines for the same. There are of course noble exceptions to this, but it is deplorable that there should be any irregularities at all in this most humane of all charities. The native vaidyans, on the other hand, have a local interest, their families living in the village for generations together and they are very keen to keep up their reputations; while the Government Surgeon is a bird of passage, who comes and goes, none of the villagers knowing whence or whither.

515 Malayalis, as a rule, are very clean, most of them bathe twice a day; their clothes are kept neat and clean. But there is much scope for the spread of modern ideas on sanitation in very many fields. At child-birth the mother is usually kept in the worst possible room in the house. Children too might be brought up in a more sanitary environment; the education of females on these matters is a very crying necessity. It is also deplorable that Brahmans are gradually neglecting the morning-bath and exercise on which their ancestors insisted. The local Muhammadans are extremely insanitary. They are filthy, their children are filthy, their habits too are filthy.

The habit of keeping the stock very near the house should be avoided. Again except in well-to-do Nayar families kitchens are in the houses; they should be in a different building.

582 [797] Among the Brahmans, a girl has to be married before the age of puberty, generally 12. Among no other caste is this compulsory, though a few people, including the Indian Christians, marry their girls before puberty. These Christians are generally converts from low caste * Hindus, and change of religion has not changed their custom in this respect.

562 The local Muhammadans do not, as in the east of the peninsula, observe purdah; their women freely talk to any person, work for others as coolies and stir abroad. Most of them are converts from low caste Hindus, and so there is no fanaticism, nor such strict observance of the rules of Islam as elsewhere. Nayar ladies are quite free, and among them descent in the female line (Marumakkattayam) prevails. Brahman ladies (not Nambudris) can go out, and be seen by others, but they are subject to their husbands and are not allowed to speak to Brahman men, and Brahman men are not allowed to speak with the women. A newly married Brahman bride is neither allowed to see nor to speak to her husband until she actually joins her husband after the nuptials. But these

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* [M. L. K. Anandakrishna Ayyar, Cochin State Anthropologist, informs me that the Syrian Christians of Cochin are mainly the descendants of converts from *high* caste Hindus.—Ed.]

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AW1 India

Kerala AW11

● 582 837 *Marriage customs.*—The custom of marriage before puberty is prevalent among Hindus, excepting Nambudris and Nayars. The Nambudris or Malabar Brahmans can give their daughters in marriage at any time they like or not marry them at all. Only the eldest male member of a Nambudri family can marry in his own caste. All the other sons keep Nayar women as mistresses. The eldest member can marry more than one wife, but many women of necessity have to remain unmarried.

[428] [586] The case of Nayars is entirely different. They follow a different system of inheritance, i.e., descent through the female. The result of this system is that the female is at full liberty to choose or to divorce husbands as she likes. The man also has the same liberty. As a consequence of the different systems of inheritance their marriage custom is also different. Before puberty some person closely connected with the family ties the sacred string round the neck of the girl. This custom is purely formal and does not make them husband and wife. Nowadays this formal business is done by the mother of the girl at the temple in the presence of God. After puberty the man who really wants to marry the girl (he must be of the same caste or some one belonging to a higher caste, preferably a Nambudri) comes, and performs the real marriage. This real marriage is binding only so long as he and she will. Divorce can be had at any time by a mere word. The woman can marry again. The death of the man does not make [585] the woman a widow. There is no widowhood for Nayar woman. In fact there is no marriage among the Nayars. What actually happens is that somebody comes and lives with a woman for a time, then leaves, and both live with others. The only restriction is that two men cannot live with one woman at the same time, but one man can cohabit with any number of women at the same time. The children [428] born of such unions inherit the property of the uncle since the descent is by the female line. Nowadays there is a strong opinion against this system and the descent from father to son is advocated by the educated few, and the proposed regulations in Cochin are attempts to make marriage binding and permanent and dissoluble only under certain circumstances, widows being still allowed to remarry.

[587] [595] With regard to all other Hindus, marriage before puberty prevails. But among the lower classes widow-marriage is allowable, money for a bridegroom is not demanded, and even polyandry is prevalent among certain sections of the Tiyyas. But only brothers can share a wife. A brother can marry his widowed sister-in-law. *Divorce* is allowed in cases of serious infidelity but divorced men and women can marry again.

562 *The purdah system* is followed by the Nambudri women alone in Malabar. They cannot see men. Whenever they come out they hold a big native kind of umbrella to hide their faces and come to the temple, etc. The ideas about the purdah system among them are changing nowadays and the abandonment of the system is hoped for in a few years. The Nambudris are also advocating changes in their marriage customs.

428 The property of a Nambudri or Nayar family cannot be divided among the family sons. The eldest has the right to manage the property and enjoy the profits. The other members of the family have a right for maintenance only. When the eldest dies the next to him in age comes to the position. Inthe case of a Nambudri

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AW1 India

Kerala AW11

There is no infant marriage except perhaps among the Brahmans. 582
Our girls are given away in marriage between the age of 10 and 12. Formerly it used to be younger. But strictly speaking this is only betrothal, the actual consummation of the marriage taking place only after the girl has attained womanhood at about 16 years of age. Our girls are very healthy and well developed so long as they remain at home. But their husbands take them away with them when they are old enough to the places where they are employed, e.g., there are three of them in Madras, and others nearer home. Boys are seldom married before 20 or 21 and the age is rising. Having to live away from home for their education their health is often impaired and they are less healthy and have less vitality and power of resistance than the girls, and are, in the writer's opinion, more subject to illness when away from home. Brahmans have to pay large dowries, whether they are able or no: the least sum being Rs. 1,000 for a bridegroom whose educational qualifications are measured by the Matriculation examination. Even 'ne'er-do-weels' get a high dowry owing to the unsatisfied demand for bridegrooms. We are groaning under the tyranny of an effete social system which is ruining us. Yet our elders protest against any change in our social system, such as post-puberty marriage. Something is sure to be done to remedy this state of things before long: the social conscience cannot long stand it.

Among other castes there is no infant-marriage, nor the system of dowries as it exists with us.

Among the Nayars there is a curious marriage ceremony 585
performed when a female child is only a few days or months old. Some male person, not necessarily or ordinarily the future husband, ties the sacred marriage thread around the baby's neck. This ceremony is purely formal. Real marriages take place after puberty, and the girl may choose any man she pleases as her husband, this marriage being not at all formal, and great freedom, [595]
comparatively, is allowed to the wife. Polyandry, which once prevailed, has now disappeared.

The purdah system does not exist except among the Nambudri 582
community of Brahmans. There are two families of Nambudri [612]
Brahmans in our village. Their females can never see the faces of any males except their husbands and near relations. They seldom go out to any distance, except to the temple, never travel by railway, and hide themselves, when going about, with huge umbrellas made of palm leaves and bamboo sticks. There is post-puberty marriage among them, and only the eldest son of the family marries. Marriages are often exchanges of bride and bridegroom (i.e., a brother and sister marry the sister and the brother of another family), and in that case dowries need not be paid. Otherwise heavy sums are paid. The Numbudri Brahmans are noted for their simple lives, their Vedic learning, and their intense conservatism, though one very enlightened and aristocratic family near my village owns a tile factory at Shoranur and a large part of a spinning mill at Calicut. They lack western education. 556
This year one Nambudripad (i.e., a member of the Nambudri aristocracy) has joined the Presidency College in Madras as an extraordinary student, to get the benefit of the lectures and the college life. He belongs to the family mentioned above, who also

601 terms of address. Related to this Dravidian terminology we find, as
[605] might be expected, that all parallel cousins on both sides are forbidden
[582] as sexual partners and consequently there is categorical cross-cousin
602 marriage (p. 397). We are not given any details regarding the
circle of kin which we have called the micro-caste, for Gough is again
more concerned with "lineages." However, it is quite clear that all the
[171] kinship customs, especially the obligations between the various categories
of kin, appear very similar to the Sinhalese.

601 The categories of the terminology are widely extended and relations
602 with paternal kin are formally defined. The son, for instance,
[769] must make annual offerings to his dead father's spirit. "Paternal kin
are known and accorded kinship terms within a range of three to five
generations" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 55). The father's sister's son was considered
to have special claims on the girl (Schneider and Gough,
1961, p. 398).

602 It is noteworthy that with the residence pattern in which men live
591 on lineage land with their MB, it is precisely the rights of the paternal
kin that are emphasized in customary rituals. Thus paternal kin have
an important place in all *rites de passage:* first pregnancy, naming,
first rice feeding, *tali*-tying, marriage, first menstruation, and death.
[553] At the naming ceremony, for instance, the infant's father's mother
chooses the name, the father's father confers it, and the father gives a
[431] gold gift (Schneider and Gough, 1961, p. 401).

[171] These rights and obligations are of interest in contrast to the Sinhalese,
where residence tends to be patrilocal and where it is, in fact,
the claims of the maternal kin that are given the most prominence in
the various life-cycle ceremonies.

602 We should observe that even the joking relationship, which is an
605 interesting feature of the Sinhalese cross-cousin relationship, is duplicated
171 in North Malabar: "Male and female cross cousins had a joking
relationship with implicit sexual privileges." And, of course, marriage
was initiated with the "gift of the cloth."

582 So far as the general structure is concerned, there is little doubt as
121 to where we are. However, we are not given much information regarding
endogamy and hypergamy. Gough notes only incidentally that
[114] "ordinary" Nambiars . . . married exclusively with each other"
[611] (1955*a*, p. 56), which suggests kin group endogamy with a likely diminution
of unilineal descent ideology in such groups. Gough elsewhere
[613] also observes in passing that there were "hypergamous marriages in
aristocratic lineages" (1961, p. 400), which conforms to the idea expressed
above. Since the pattern can be seen with greater clarity in the
evidence regarding the Cochin aristocrats, I refrain from discussing the
question of hypergamy here.

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
Kerala AW11

NORTH TIYYAR

The organization of kinship among the Tiyyar is so similar to the 121
Nayar castes that an extended discussion is unnecessary. Gough observes 591
a difference of degree in the question of the locality of marriage: 60
whereas Nayar men may return to the lands of their MB and [564]
marry there, the Tiyyar tend to be grouped together in patrilocal [114]
clusters, except that there are some among them who also return to live with their MB (1961, p. 409). These slight differences are unlikely to be of great significance, for the reader should recall that many of these marriages take place in the same village or area, that in this region houses and huts are easy to build and that Nayar men tend to build houses for their wives and children as well.

In Gough's writings the similarity of the kin structure between the 60
Tiyyar and the Sinhalese is particularly evident. The claims of the 171
cross-cousins upon each other, the categorical Dravidian terminology, the nature of the marriage tie, and the various details of custom clearly indicate that we are dealing with the same cultural idiom.

The claims of the MB and FZ are manifested in *rites de passage*. In 604
the *tali* ceremony (which is the well-known prepuberty rite in this 588
area) both these persons appear, and the FZ (or MB wife) ties the *tali* as a "potential mother-in-law" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 58).

The role of the cross-cousins is perhaps more revealing. "The cross- 605
cousin's claim to become a girl's husband . . . must be met at the 582
. . . marriage ceremony if the girl marries some other man. As the 585
couple leave the house, the girl's cross-cousin steps forward in mock attack . . . He is bought off by the bridegroom with a nominal fee
and the couple then pass unmolested" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 59).[8] This [171]
symbolic statement is identical to the Sinhalese, where the cross-cousin stops the bridal couple at the gate and demands his rights. He is given one hundred betel leaves and the couple moves on.

The Tiyyar of Cochin

It is intriguing to study the kin structure of the Tiyyar caste South 564 611
Malabar and Cochin—the same term as in North Malabar—which 591

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[8] There is an interesting contradiction in Gough's materal: though she writes of [114]
the similarity of the Nayar and the Tiyyar, she notes that with the Tiyyar the MBS (i.e., FZD) is the correct marriage partner (1955*a*, p. 57), whereas with the Nayar the FZS (i.e., MBD) is considered the rightful claimant (1961, p. 398). In view of Dumont's discussion, it would be interesting to know whether significant preferences are involved. Gough does not pursue the matter, but given the contradictions involved in patrilateral cross-cousin marriage (e.g., it cannot be combined with hypergamy rules) it is likely that Gough is merely using a shorthand formula for symmetrical cross-cousin marriage.

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
Kerala AW11

564 here turns out to be patrilineal and patrilocal. We shall see that, as
611 usual, the question of descent is attached to the same general structures
[591] as elsewhere.

613 We first note that the "patrilineage" of the South is called a *taravad*
like the matrilineal units of the Nayar. The patrilineage is reported to
be exogamous with a depth of five to seven generations united by the
595 worship of lineage gods, ancestors, and snakes. Marriage tends to be
[591] patrilocal, and one of the interesting features of the Tiyyar of this
[171] area is that, as with the Sinhalese, polyandrous marriages are freely
permitted. A woman is married to a group of brothers who have access
585 to her, it is said, by order of seniority. The ceremony of marriage
171 again involves the gift of the cloth, and we note the custom of feeding
the groom or grooms and the bride with porridge and milk as with
various groups in Ceylon.

593 Inheritance is in the male line, but women retain rights in their
[428] natal household. Indeed, this right is expressed in the customary relations
between brothers and sisters. At divorce, the woman returns to
[586] her brother. Her eldest brother is considered her guardian. At the
[765] death of a married woman, her brothers and their children observe
[783] ritual pollution. At the death of a man, his sister's sons observe pollution
and perform mourning offerings to his spirit.

604 The customary claim of the MB and the FZ are given recognition in
588 numerous ceremonies. In the prepuberty rituals, a girl goes through
[613] a mock-marriage ceremony with a boy from a "lineage" into which
[605] she might marry, who clearly stands to her in the relation of cross-cousin.
Her "mother's brother's wife" (FZ?) parts her hair in certain
pregnancy ceremonies. The ritual husband-boy is brought by his MB,
and the girl by her MB. The boy places the *tali* necklace—indicative
of married status—on her neck, where it is tied by her FZ.

582 Gough notes that cross-cousin marriage is "preferential," though
605 with the observation that it is not "enjoined to the extent" that it is
114 in the North (1955*a*, p. 62). It is clear that this statement refers to
actual cross-cousin, not categorical cross-cousin, marriage. We are
informed that parallel cousins on both sides are tabooed and must
conclude that here again we have the Dravidian pattern of categorical
cross-cousin marriage.

601 I have no information about the terminology of reference or address,
576 though it seems likely that terms of reference, at least, are identical to
those of the North Tiyyar.

121 I think that all the elements of the general structure can be detected
602 in this system. There is categorical cross-cousin marriage, and the
various claims of the MB and FZ upon Ego are indicated in ritual
terms. This is quite in accordance, as we noted before, with the strong

claim of the brothers and sisters upon one another, a point which is 121
indeed specifically made by Gough (1955*a*, p. 61). 602

In view of all this evidence, it is somewhat disconcerting to discover 602
that Gough finds it necessary to identify "residual matrilineages" to 613
explain the role of maternal kin as well as the taboos on maternal 114
parallel cousins in this caste. We are faced once more with the inexplicable bias in the direction of "lineage" explanations to the exclusion of others even in so sophisticated an observer as Dr. Gough.

She notes (1957*a*, p. 61) that "the former existence of exogamous 602
matrilineal clans underlines this persistence of the bond between 614
women and their natal kinfolk, especially their brothers." But the 114
evidence she gives (p. 60) to show even the former existence of such clans is hardly convincing: "My informants knew nothing about these clans except that they were once exogamous. They are not so today,
since some people do not remember their clan names. Though the [582] •
clans have died out, marriage is prohibited between known matrilineal kin."

Although the general structure is verified in this group as well, we 602
have no information regarding hypergamy. We can only say with 611
certainty that the comparison of the Tiyyar in North and South [582]
Malabar shows quite directly that slight variations permit the general structure to be linked to a patrilineal as well as a matrilineal descent ideology. The underlying theme is general, and the variations in descent, in residence, in inheritance are local and highly specific.

THE MATRILINEAL CASTES OF COCHIN AND HYPERGAMY

Before we turn to an examination of the aristocratic matrilineages of 121
Cochin which have fascinated many anthropologists by their perfectly 564
logical but highly exotic solutions to sex and marriage, I wish to 582
underline some of the principles of endogamy and hypergamy. 613

First, the purpose of endogamy is to cut off the unit from kinship connections with other units. A complete severance of all intercourse (food and sex are usually chosen as symbols) renders the unit unique, but it will not in itself establish hierarchical superiority. To express hierarchy (as well as separation) some asymmetrical relations are logically necessary. In endogamous castes this takes the form of asymmetrical forms of address, dress symbolism, and, significantly, a rule such as "They will take food from us (*A*), but we will not take food from them (*B*)—*A*, in other words, is superior to *B*.

Second, when the groups are placed on an interlocking hierarchy, more subtle expressions can be used. "*A* will not accept food from *B*,

121 but *B* will from *A*; furthermore, *A* will not 'give' women to *B*, but
564 will 'take' women from *B*." The second method (hypergamy), though
582 only a logical development of the first, and a very precise way of
613 manifesting superior status, has complex implications. In effect, a progressive distinction of status is made between the children of the sister (superior) and the children of the brother (inferior). Hence not merely the caste but the entire network of kinship is placed on a gradient of ritual status. Furthermore, if hypergamy is to be combined with lineages, it should be clear that, although the matter can be harmoniously combined with matrilineages (i.e., the brother partaking of the superior ritual connections of his sister), the patrilineal principles raise difficult problems, since the sister is given "away" to a superior group and the brothers can partake in the increase in ritual status only by reason of their claims on her children or in some other indirect fashion. Also, since the position of the woman affects the status of her children in both matrilineal and patrilineal contexts, it appears difficult to combine intracaste hypergamy with patrilineal descent at least in South India. Thus we get ZD marriage (i.e., symmetrical exchange) coupled with Brahman caste endogamy in Tanjore, but an entire scale of hypergamous matrilineages all the way from Kshatriya to Sudra status in Malabar. A similar feature was observed in eastern Ceylon.

The first method (endogamy) permits the ethnographer to make simple statements about discrete categories of people; the second (hypergamy) is more complex, since the status-bearing unit can be a single lineage with hypergamous connections and it may be difficult in the continuous descending steps of status to say exactly where one "caste" category ends and the next begins (see fig. 37).

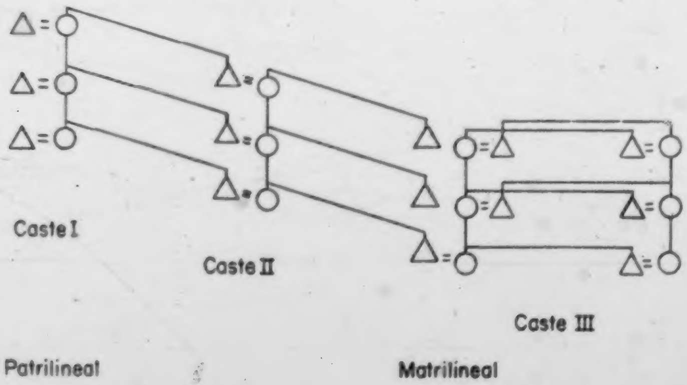

Figure 37. Patrilineal and matrilineal hypergamy.

Let us now return to the facts:

The Nayar family in Cochin and South Malabar (also referred to 613
as Central Kerala) is also organized on the principles of the matrilineal
taravad. Among ordinary people, matrilineal groups beyond the house-
hold are barely recognized for most intents and purposes, but among
the wealthy and aristocratic classes, the *taravad* finds an impressive
elaboration. Gough presents the ideal model as a matrilineal clan [114]
with localized matri-lines all of which are exogamous. The women
have equal or hypergamous connections with men of other *taravad*
or castes, whereas the men visit women of lower *taravad*. The resi- 591
dential pattern is that brothers and sisters live in the same house-
hold and men visit their "wives" in their own households. This con- [184]
trasts with the North Nayar picture in which women join their [191]
husbands in their houses, and with the Mapilla picture (their Muslim
neighbors) in which the men join their wives in the houses as in
Ceylon. Of course, in a climate and region where houses are easily [602]
built and where the kin of both the husband and the wife are quite
likely to be in the near vicinity of the married couple, if not in the
same community, these residential arrangements may be looked upon
primarily as symbolic statements of "difference" rather than funda-
mental differences in kinship systems and sentiments.

We may now raise further questions:

First: to what extent does our previous discussion of the general 121
structure help us to understand the Nayar situation? A careful exami- 114
nation of the data makes it clear that the Nayar family in Cochin
and South Malabar presents a further elaboration upon the Dravidian
theme. It should be emphasized that this is hardly the impression one
would have received from the earlier work of Gough. It is curious to [613]
observe, as Dumont (1961*a*) does, to what extent Gough's picture of [602]
the Nayar situation has progressively altered from one in which there [582]
were matrilineages with hardly any recognition of the role of the
pater, to one in which the father and his kin are recognized and
"preferential" cross-cousin marriage is at least observed. The change
in point of view is a sobering thought as far as "objective" anthro-
pology is concerned: for a perusal of the writings of this highly ob-
servant and careful author shows that she is using an African model
(including concepts of clanship and ties of ritual collaboration) in
her earlier work. It is only very gradually that she comes around to
consider her material in its context in South India.

As far as we can observe, the kin terminology of the high-caste 121
Nayar of Cochin and South Malabar is structurally identical to that 601
of North Malabar and hence to the Dravidian terminology of cross- 114
cousin marriage, with one significant difference: there appears to be 184
no term for actual cross-cousins. It is true that Gough does not provide 605

121 a consistent terminology of reference—which is important in South
601 India and Ceylon—but since the language and indeed all the rest of
114 the terms themselves are identical to those of North Malabar, the lack
[184] of terms precisely for cross-cousins may be significant. The matter is
[605] all the more curious since such terms as, for example, *maru mahan*
(son "by marriage"!)[9] which Ego uses for ZS in the same *taravad*
and which reciprocates with MB (*mama*) also carry the implication
"son-in-law" and "father-in-law."

121 However we may wish to interpret this intriguing lacuna (could it
582 be an aspect of Nambudiri–Nayar hypergamy?), it appears that there
605 is, first, a prohibition on sexual and marital connections with parallel
114 cousins and also a "preference" for cross-cousin marriage. Both rules
[834] are clearly present, though they do not carry the categorical implication which is attached to them elsewhere.

Gough's account of this matter is not very clear. She notes first (1961, p. 365): "Bilateral cross-cousin marriage was freely permitted, with some preference for marriage to the mother's brother's daughter or step-daughter." A little further on she notes the "preference" in passing: "It may seem strange that preferred cross-cousin marriage should have existed side by side with group marriage, for cross-cousin marriage . . . suggests an interest in prolonging the ties brought about both by paternity and by matrilineal kinship."

114 It seems to me that even in her most recent publication Gough is
121 trying to minimize the role of paternity among the Nayar when the
582 facts are palpably otherwise. She notes, "Many men, presumably,
851 entered marriage relations with cross-cousins only incidentally—often,
presumably, without being fully aware of the blood relationship" (1961, p. 365)—a presumption which seems extremely unlikely even in the Malabar conditions she describes.

121 We should perhaps stress that Gough's data suggest much closer
114 similarities to a South Indian pattern than her theoretical framework
605 permits. Consider the customary relations between cross-cousins:
"Cross-cousins of the same sex and caste had a familiar, mildly joking relationship if they maintained contact . . . cross-cousins of the opposite sex might talk to each other with rather more freedom than to
[588] unrelated persons. In his role of enangan a boy sometimes tied the
[613] tali for his maternal uncle's daughter . . ." (1961, pp. 364–365).

121 We should note this last sentence particularly: the role of *enangan*
114 as a cross-cousin and hence a perpetual affine on the Dravidian pattern
613 is a new development in the work of Gough. It confirms our impres-
184 sion that even in Cochin where the *taravad* reaches its greatest devel-
[605] opment, a version of the general structure is still visible. The question of "perpetual affinity" has been discussed extensively by Dumont

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[9] See the discussions of *maru* by Karve (1953, p. 213) and by Dumont (1957*a*).

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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(1961*b*, pp. 20 ff.), and it is important in tying the Nayar material into 121
the South Indian picture. 613

With all these similarities, in what sense, then, is this system a [114
logical elaboration of the general structure? What makes the structure 184]
of kinship among the aristocratic Nayar a special case is that in it we
find again the combination of hypergamy and unilineal descent.

As we noted above, extensive hypergamy in the context of matrilineage results in a consistent differentiation of status between lineages, and it allows special ritual status to be claimed by each autonomous matrilineage. It will be observed that matrilateral cross-cousin marriage is the only consistent pattern that can be associated with the hypergamous and matrilineal kin structure described above.

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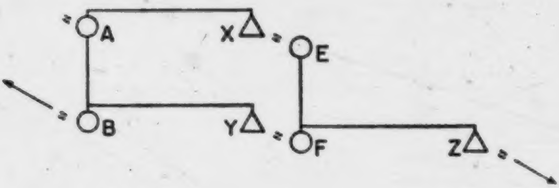

Figure 38. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage.

In figure 38, sister A establishes a *sambandam* connection with a person of superior status. Her children, B and Y (members of the matrilineage), are themselves superior in status to the children of their MB (X), who has a *sambandam* with a woman of equal or lower status to himself (E). Hence if cross-cousin marriage is to take place, the MBD (F) may be hypergamously connected with Y (i.e., matrilateral cross-cousin marriage), but B, like her mother A, will be given further up the hierarchy and cannot be permitted to have *sambandam* with Z (i.e., patrilateral cross-cousin marriage).

We should note in passing that this association of MBD marriage 121
and hypergamy in these castes is a remarkable corroboration of Leach's 114
hypothesis regarding the structural implications of matrilateral cross- 582
cousin marriage systems. Leach (1951) writes of patrilineal systems 611
associated with hypogamy (women go down) among the Kachin. It is [171]
certainly salutary to find that this mirror-image of Leach's model,
that is, matrilateral cross-cousin marriage in a matrilineal context, is
associated with hypergamy, asymmetry, and distinctions of status.

To return to Malabar, the combination of matrilineal descent to- 121
gether with the rules of hypergamy is consistent with great differenti- 564
ation of status between the descent groups—so much so that in the 611
proliferation of descent groups it appears to be difficult, indeed impossible, to say where one caste ends and the other begins. Some de-